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## Trump says U.S. 'very ready' for virus; Pence to lead response

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Donald Trump declared Wednesday that the U.S. is "very, very ready" for whatever the coronavirus threat brings, and he put his vice president in charge of overseeing the nation's response. Trump sought to minimize fears of the virus spreading widely across the U.S., saying, "I don't think it's inevitable."

But standing next to him at a White House news

conference were health authorities who reiterated that Americans need to get ready for what could become a wider outbreak requiring such steps as school closures. More than 81,000 cases of COVID-19, an illness characterized by fever and coughing and sometimes shortness of breath or pneumonia, have occurred since the new virus emerged in China.

Continued on Page 2



Vice President Mike Pence speaks as President Donald Trump listens during a news conference about the coronavirus in the Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

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## Trump says U.S. 'very ready' for virus; Pence to lead response



President Donald Trump, with members of the President's Coronavirus Task Force, holds a paper about countries best and least prepared to deal with a pandemic, during a news conference in the Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

The National Institutes of Health's top infectious disease chief cautioned a vaccine won't be ready for widespread use for a year or more — but said the virus might return, so researchers

have to push ahead.

NIH's Dr. Anthony Fauci called it "quite conceivable" that the virus will "come back and recycle next year. In that case, we hope to have a vaccine." Trump said Vice President Mike Pence will be working

with CDC, NIH and other government agencies to coordinate the response. In previous outbreaks, the White House has appointed a "czar" to pull together the different departments' work. "We're very, very ready for this, for anything," even if it's "a breakout of larger proportions," Trump told a news conference.

The U.S. announced a 15th case of coronavirus Wednesday, bringing the total number of infected people in the country to 60. No details were released immediately on the newest case. But the higher count includes people who traveled back from outbreak areas in Asia: three who were evacuated from the central China city of Wuhan and 42 Americans

who were evacuated from the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Japan. On Capitol Hill, senior lawmakers called for a bipartisan spending package that would give federal, state and local officials more resources. Trump had requested \$2.5 billion to fight the virus; Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York countered with an \$8.5 billion proposal. Trump told reporters he was open to spending "whatever's appropriate."

Republican and Democratic lawmakers alike have questioned whether Trump's original request is sufficient. House Appropriations chairwoman Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., said it's premature to put a price tag on the package. "We're working on it and we'll have a number but I'm not sure it's going to be the number that Schumer's proposing," said Lowey, adding that she's working with lawmakers of both parties.

Aides said the House measure is likely to be unveiled next week. Bipartisan "four corner" meetings — Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate — began Wednesday, a House Democratic aide said, with a bipartisan bill the goal. Schumer has been harshly critical of Trump's response to the outbreak, and his request — announced before the Democratic-controlled House Appropriations Committee has weighed in — rankled some Democrats hoping for quick, bipartisan action to address the crisis.

Arriving back in the U.S. early Wednesday, Trump immediately began to counter critics who say he should have acted sooner to bolster the federal re-

sponse to the coronavirus. Trump has wondered aloud if Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar is the right person to lead the administration's response. The White House had considered naming a virus czar, but was not sure that was the right route, said a person familiar with the discussions. Azar himself was said to be supportive of naming a czar.

Among those under consideration for such a post: Former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations.

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham was also pushing back. Grisham retweeted a CDC post that said "there is currently no reported community spread" of coronavirus in the U.S. This week, the NIH received a shipment of test doses of a vaccine candidate from Moderna Inc., in preparation for first-step safety testing in a few dozen people aimed to begin by April. But Fauci cautioned reporters that in a best-case scenario, "you're talking about a year to a year and a half" before any vaccine would be ready for widespread use. Fauci said that while only a few cases have turned up in the U.S. from travelers outside the country, "we need to be able to think about how we will respond to a pandemic outbreak."

"It's very clear. If we have a global pandemic, no country is going to be without impact," Fauci said.

A pandemic involves the continual spread of sustained transmission from person to person in multiple regions and hemispheres throughout the world simultaneously, Fauci noted. □

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## Barr, DeVos speak at religious broadcasters forum

By TRAVIS LOLLER  
Associated Press

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)** — U.S. Attorney General William Barr warned a group of Christian broadcasters on Wednesday that the decline of religion in America is undermining liberal democracy. In a speech at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Tennessee, Barr said religion is necessary to provide citizens with a moral compass. Without religious morality, tyranny is necessary to control people, he said. Barr told an audience of a few hundred that the

courts' misinterpretation of the Constitution's Establishment Clause is helping drive the erosion of religion "and its benevolent influence on our communal life."

"While most everyone agrees that we must have separation of church and state, this does not require that we drive religion from the public square and affirmatively use government power to promote a culture of disbelief," he said to applause. Barr also asserted that progressives want to use public benefits to create a permanent and dependent political con-

stituency. "The tacit goal of this project is to convert all of us into 25-year-olds living in the government's basement, focusing our energies on obtaining a larger allowance rather than getting a job, and moving out and taking responsibility for ourselves," Barr said to enthusiastic applause. Barr said he's an optimist who believes that "the nation's greatest days lie ahead." He told the broadcasters that their role is vitally important in providing a diversity of voices in an ever-consolidating media environment.





Education Secretary Betsy DeVos speaks at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

"In this secular age it is especially vital that our religious perspective is voiced," he said. □

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## Court OKs Texas winner-take-all presidential elector system

By **KEVIN MCGILL**  
**Associated Press**

**NEW ORLEANS (AP)** — The winner-take-all system Texas and 47 other states use to assign Electoral College presidential votes is constitutional, a federal appeals

court said Wednesday. A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans unanimously upheld a lower court's dismissal of a lawsuit challenging the Texas system. It was the lat-

est defeat for organizations challenging such systems in Texas and three other states. Cases are pending at the appellate level in at least two of those cases. Domingo Garcia, national president of the League of



In this July 9, 2019 file photo, people wait in line to enter the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

**Associated Press**

United Latin American Citizens, a lead plaintiff in the case, said he expects the issue to wind up at the Supreme Court. LULAC said in a news release that it was considering its next move. The league and its allies could request a rehearing by the full 5th Circuit, which has 16 active members, or go straight to the Supreme Court. The 5th Circuit ruling cited appellate and Supreme Court decisions dating back to the 1960s that have upheld the winner-take-all system. It rejected challengers' assertions that electors should be allocated proportionately, based on a percentage of the popular vote for each pres-

idential candidate. Among those pushing the challenges are LULAC and attorney David Boies, who represented then-Vice President Al Gore in the litigation over the Florida vote count in the 2000 presidential election. The challenges say the winner-take-all system violates the "one-person, one-vote" principle arising from constitutional equal protection and freedom of association rights. But the 5th Circuit panel cited court precedents holding that each citizen in each state is afforded the opportunity to vote and that the winner-take-all system does not deprive any one of that right. □

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## Report: Domestic extremists killed at least 42 in 2019



In this Aug. 12, 2019 photo, mourners visit the makeshift memorial near the Walmart in El Paso, Texas, where 22 people were killed in a mass shooting that police are investigating as a terrorist attack targeting Latinos.

Associated Press

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN  
Associated Press

White supremacists and other far-right extremists killed at least 38 people in the U.S. in 2019, the sixth deadliest year for violence by all domestic extremists since 1970, according to a report issued Wednesday by a group that fights anti-semitism.

The Anti-Defamation League counted a total of 42 domestic extremism-related slayings last year. The gunman who shot and killed 22 people in August 2019 at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, accounted for more than half of them. Patrick Crusius, the suspect in that shooting rampage, is accused of targeting Mexicans at the store and faces federal hate crime charges.

Only the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols

in 1995 and the Pulse nightclub shooting by Omar Mateen in 2016 were deadlier attacks by domestic extremists in the past 50 years, according to the New York City-based ADL.

The ADL's annual Murder and Extremism report says domestic extremists of all kinds killed 42 people in a total of 17 separate incidents last year, down from 53 killings in 2018 but higher than the 41 in 2017.

"This is part of a general trend of increasingly lethal attacks by domestic extremists in the United States," the report says. Four of the deadliest years for extremist-related violence have occurred in the past five years, according to the ADL.

Right-wing extremists killed at least 330 people over the past decade, accounting for 76% of all domestic extremist-related killings.

"This should no longer come as a shock to anyone," the ADL's CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt, said in a statement.

"Lawmakers, law enforcement and the public need to recognize the grave and dangerous threat posed by violent white supremacy. We cannot begin to defeat this deadly form of hatred if we fail to even recognize it."

The four killings that weren't deemed to be acts of violence by far-right extremists were from the same case: the December 2019 attacks in Jersey City, New Jersey, that killed a police officer in a cemetery and three people at a kosher grocery store.

Authorities said the attackers, David Anderson and Francine Graham, were motivated by a hatred of Jewish people and law enforcement. Both had ties to

the Black Hebrew Israelite movement, which defies a simple "left-right" classification, the ADL says.

"It is important to remember that extremist murders represent merely the tip of a pyramid of extremist violence in the United States," the report says. "For every person killed by an extremist, many more are wounded or injured in attempted murders and assaults."

Fourteen of the 17 cases of killings by domestic extremists last year involved a single death, the ADL says. One of those appears to be the first killing linked to QAnon, a far-right conspiracy theory that centers on the baseless belief that President Donald Trump is waging a secret campaign against enemies in the "deep state" and a child sex trafficking ring run by satanic pedophiles and cannibals.

Anthony Comello, who is charged with killing a New York mob boss in March 2019, displayed QAnon-related messages on his hand during a court hearing. A defense attorney has claimed Comello was deluded by internet conspiracy theories and thought he

was helping Trump defend democracy.

"Extremist conspiracy theories can create such a sense of urgency in their followers that some of them may feel motivated to act," the ADL report says.

None of the 42 killings last year was linked to domestic Islamist extremism, a first since 2012. However, a Saudi Arabian aviation student accused of fatally shooting three people at a U.S. naval base in Pensacola, Florida, in December is believed to be motivated by Islamic extremism.

The base shootings appeared to be the first lethal foreign terror attack on American soil since the 9/11 terror attacks, the ADL report says. The group's annual tally of domestic extremism slayings doesn't include foreign terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

"It is clear the threat to the U.S. from Islamist extremists willing to commit violent acts remains a serious one," the report adds.

The ADL, founded in 1913, describes itself as a "global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education and fighting hate online." □

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# Tribal leader: Work to build border wall hurts sacred land



Construction crews perform a controlled detonation at the base of Monument Hill in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument west of Lukeville, Ariz., on Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.

Associated Press

By ANITA SNOW  
Associated Press

**PHOENIX (AP)** — A Native American leader from Arizona grew emotional Wednesday as he told a congressional committee about the pain members of his tribe feel about U.S. officials blasting through land they consider sacred to build part of President Donald Trump's wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"No one reveres our military veterans more than the O'odham, however, dynamiting these sacred sites and burial grounds is the same as bulldozing Arlington National Cemetery or any other cemetery," Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris told lawmakers in Washington. His testimony came hours after the government carried out a new round of explosions near the southern border as a group of invited journalists watched. Con-

struction crews this month began blasting and bulldozing through hills to build a 30-foot (9-meter) steel wall 60 feet wide (18 meters wide) in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

Environmental groups also are decrying the work at the national parks system site that's named for its cactuses resembling organ pipes and is a largely untouched example of Sonoran Desert habitat.

"It's hard to see the blasting that you showed on the video today because I know in my heart what our elders have told us: that it is home to our ancestors," Norris said, choking up.

The administration says archaeological monitors working with Customs and Border Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers have found no sign of burial or other sacred sites in the area. Department of Homeland Security acting

Secretary Chad F. Wolf told Congress on Tuesday that he plans to travel soon to meet with the tribe to discuss their concerns.

U.S. Reps. Ruben Gallego and Raul Grijalva, both Arizona Democrats, also spoke against construction of the wall during the meeting of the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples. The Tohono O'odham Nation stretches across southern Arizona and into Mexico.

U.S. Rep. Deb Haaland, a New Mexico Democrat and member of the Laguna Pueblo tribe, also spoke passionately, saying: "When tribal leaders don't have a seat at the table, indigenous history is lost."

U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar, an Arizona Republican, noted that Organ Pipe is a well-known human and drug smuggling corridor and site of the 2002 shooting death

of Kris Eggle, a park ranger who died while pursuing suspected drug cartel members. Environmental advocates and elected officials are concerned about the wall's potential effects in Organ Pipe, including on water from an underground aquifer and migrating animals. A desert oasis in the monument, Quitobaquito Springs, is home to the endangered Sonoyta mud turtle and Quitobaquito pupfish. Border Patrol Chief Roy D. Villareal, of the agency's Tucson Sector, said on Twitter in recent days that over 90% of the cactuses near the construction area were carefully transplanted, saving more than 2,000 individual plants. He also said archaeological monitors had not found burial sites or human remains in the detonation zone at a place called Monument Hill.

Laiken Jordahl of the Tuc-

son-based environmental nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity challenges those assertions, saying on Twitter that he has seen chopped up cactus on the ground and water being wasted for concrete during recent visits.

Jordahl posted a video on social media earlier this month of one of the blasts that are carving a pathway for the wall through Monument Hill. It showed a long line of puffs of smoke and dust rising up from the dry desert landscape dotted with scrub and cactus.

The U.N. has designated the monument an International Biosphere Reserve.

The Army Corps of Engineers has said the Department of Defense awarded \$891 million in contracts to Southwest Valley Constructors in May to build the border wall on Organ Pipe and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. □



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## Multiple people dead in Milwaukee shooting at Molson Coors

By C. ANTLEFINGER/ G. EHLKE  
Associated Press

**MILWAUKEE (AP)** — Multiple people were killed Wednesday in a shooting on the Molson Coors Brewing Co. campus, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said.

The dead include the shooter, said Barrett, who did not give an exact number of people killed.

President Donald Trump addressed the shooting before speaking at the White House with reporters about steps his administration is taking to combat the coronavirus. He said the attacker killed five people and wounded others.

"Our hearts break for them and their loved ones," the president said. "We send our condolences. We'll be with them, and it's a terrible thing, a terrible thing."

Local media reported other numbers of dead, citing unnamed law enforcement sources. "It is a horrible, horrible day for the employees here. It's a very rough day for anyone who is close to this situation," the

mayor said. Police tweeted that there was no longer an active threat. Authorities did not immediately release details about the shooter or how the shooting unfolded. It occurred at a sprawling complex that includes a mix of corporate offices and brewing facilities. At least 600 people work at the complex, which is widely known in the Milwaukee area as "Miller Valley," a reference to the Miller Brewing Co. that is now part of Molson Coors. James Boyles told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that his wife, Lasonya Ragdales, works at Molson Coors in the claims department. She was texting from inside the facility and told her husband that there was an active shooter and she was locked in a room with a bunch of co-workers, the Journal Sentinel reported. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers was on his way to the scene. Attorney General Josh Kaul called the shooting "gut-wrenching."

"Miller Valley" features a



Police work outside the Molson Coors Brewing Co. campus in Milwaukee on Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020, after reports of a possible shooting.

Associated Press

160-year-old brewery, with a packaging center that fills thousands of cans and bottles every minute and a distribution center the size of five football fields. A massive red Miller sign towers over the complex and is a well-known symbol in Mil-

waukee, where beer and brewing are intertwined in the city's history.

The facility is also home to corporate customer service, finance, human resources and engineering. Tours take people to underground caves where beer

was once stored, a saloon with intricate woodwork, a stein hall with stained-glass windows, a champagne room meeting hall with leaded-glass windows, and an outdoor beer garden that can hold 300 people. □

## Woman accused of leaving her boyfriend in suitcase to die

**WINTER PARK, Fla. (AP)** — Authorities in Florida have arrested a woman accused of zipping her boyfriend into a suitcase, recording his repeated cries for help and leaving him locked inside until he died, according to sheriff's office documents. Deputies with the Orange County Sheriff's Office took Sarah Boone, 42, into custody on second-degree murder charges in the death of Jorge Torres Jr., 42, the agency said in a statement Tuesday.

Boone called 911 Monday afternoon from her Winter Park home and told

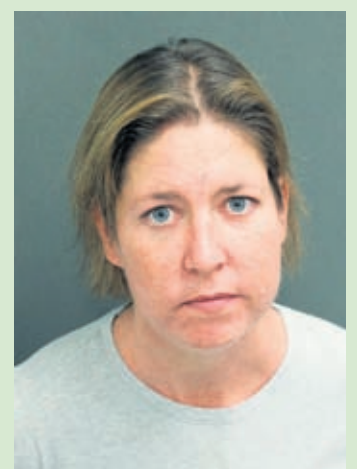
dispatchers her boyfriend was dead, news outlets reported.

Investigators said she claimed they had been drinking the night before and agreed it would be funny if Torres got into the suitcase during a game of hide-and-seek, according to an arrest affidavit from the sheriff's office.

Boone reportedly admitted she zipped Torres into the suitcase, went upstairs to bed and awoke the next morning to find him still inside and unresponsive, the document alleged. The sheriff's office said Boone's state-

ments didn't line up with video evidence found on her phone showing a blue suitcase facing downward with Torres trying to free himself. In the video, he called for help and yelled that he couldn't breathe, deputies wrote in the affidavit. Boone could be heard laughing and saying:

"That's what I feel like when you cheat on me," according to the document. It's unclear whether Boone has an attorney who can comment on her behalf. □



This Monday, Feb. 24, 2020 booking photo from the Orange County Sheriff's Office shows Sarah Boone.

Associated Press



# Greek islanders attack riot police in migrant camp protests

By **NICHOLAS PAPHITIS**

**Associated Press**

**ATHENS, Greece (AP)** —

Greece's government hoped to defuse tensions after protests over plans for new migrant camps on two of its islands Wednesday turned into violent clashes between police and local residents, some armed with Molotov cocktails and shotguns.

Hundreds of residents attacked police officers guarding the sites of the future detention camps on the islands of Lesbos and Chios. A large crowd later laid siege for hours to a Lesbos army camp where riot-control squads were billeted.

Dozens of police officers were injured during the unrest, and the Greek government's spokesman said many of the riot police deployed to the islands this week would be pulled out. Government migration officials have vowed to press ahead with plans to replace overcrowded and squalid migrant camps with more restrictive detention centers. But local officials and residents oppose the plans, with many demanding that no migrants should remain on the islands.

Local authorities declared a 24-hour strike and staged large protest rallies that devolved into the violence Wednesday. Greek officials said 43 police officers were



**A protester throws a petrol bomb against riot police during clashes in Diavolorema near the area where the government plans to build a new migrant detention center, on the northeastern Aegean island of Lesbos, Greece, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.**

**Associated Press**

injured on Lesbos, which sees the most arrivals as migrants cross the sea from nearby Turkey. Two had leg wounds from shotgun blasts, officials said.

Another nine officers were injured on Chios, where an angry mob burst into a hotel used by riot police, beat up officers resting in their rooms and threw out their belongings.

One man was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the attack and another was being sought. Police said 10 protesters were injured on both islands.

Greece's Aegean Sea is-

lands are a main entry point for migrants seeking better lives in the European Union. Managing the flow of people — and growing discontent among island residents — has become the main challenge for the center-right government of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Mitsotakis invited regional and local officials for talks in Athens on Thursday.

Government spokesman Stelios Petsas said police showed "unprecedented restraint" during the clashes and riot squad members would be recalled once

preparatory work was completed on the proposed detention center construction sites.

"The first phase was completed on Lesbos today and will be completed tomorrow on Chios, and police will have no reason to stay there," Petsas told private broadcaster Alpha TV. "Some of those that were sent from Athens will return, and the rest will stay in place."

But he insisted that the planned centers would be built.

"The plan will go ahead and we need to see how

it can be done best. It's the only plan we have on the table," he said.

Local authorities declared a 24-hour strike and staged large protest rallies Wednesday on Lesbos and Chios. H

Lesbos, and to a lesser extent Chios, annually receive tens of thousands of people fleeing war or poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The migrants cross from the nearby Turkish coast in small, unseaworthy boats provided by smuggling gangs.

Under a 2016 deal between the European Union and Turkey, migrants reaching the islands must stay there until their asylum requests are processed — and if these are rejected they must be taken back by Turkey.

But delays in the asylum process, coupled with increased migrant flows, placed massive strains on the system and led to a sharp deterioration of living conditions in existing camps whose populations burgeoned — despite Greek authorities moving people judged as vulnerable to the mainland. Furthermore, returns to Turkey have been negligible.

Lesbos, with a permanent population of 85,000, now has more than 21,000 migrants according to the latest official data available Wednesday. □

# UN: Rival Libyan politicians meet for peace talks in Geneva

By **ISABEL DEBRE**

**Associated Press**

**CAIRO (AP)** — Rival Libyan politicians met on Wednesday for U.N.-sponsored political talks in Geneva aimed at ending the latest round of fighting over the country's capital, Tripoli.

Yet just hours later, the High Council of State, an advisory body to the western Tripoli-based government, sent a letter to the U.N. mission demanding that talks be suspended until "concrete progress is made" in ongoing military negotiations.

In the east of the country, the spokesperson for the rival Tobruk-based House



**In this May 21, 2019 file photo, Tripoli government forces clash with forces led by Field Marshal Khalifa Hifter, south of the capital Tripoli, Libya.**

**Associated Press**

of Representatives also requested a postponement and said it would pull its

participants. Power in Libya is divided between two rival governments, in the

east and west of the country, and a patchwork of armed groups that support either administration.

In the wake of intensified international diplomatic efforts, the U.N. launched three parallel tracks of negotiations to push a cease-fire and resolve various crises in war-torn Libya. It's an uphill battle in a country with competing political structures.

Disagreements over the delegate list for Wednesday's talks swiftly surfaced, as rival officials objected to the last-minute inclusion of several independent politicians in the Tripoli

delegation. "We stress our agreement to choosing the group of additional representatives...to ensure it represents a cross section of Libyan society," said the High Council of State letter. The declared cease-fire deal, now under review by Libya's competing leaders, addresses the return of thousands of displaced civilians to Tripoli. But it makes no mention of key points of contention, such as the withdrawal of eastern-based forces or the demobilization of formidable militias loosely allied with the U.N.-supported Tripoli government. □



Salvatore Ferragamo

Baccarat

MONT BLANC

BALLY

Jessica Simpson

TOUS

LALIQUE

LLADRÓ

HERMÈS PARIS

MAC

HUBLOT

ESTÉE LAUDER

VICTORIA'S SECRET

SWAROVSKI

Dior GLASSES

STEFAN HAFNER EXCLUSIVE ITALIAN JEWELRY

daisy fuentes

CHANEL

MESSIKA PARIS

HARRY WINSTON

QUIKSILVER

Prada

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SALVATORE FERRAGAMO  
BALLY  
TOUS  
SAN MARINA  
S A L U ART GALLERY (POP UP STORE)

**SHOPPING**

VICTORIA SECRET  
MONARCH  
HOTLOOK  
GIORDANO  
PENHA

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**BEAUTY CARE/ SPA**

AQUA NAILS AND SPA  
ARUBA HAPPY LASHES

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## Trial begins for jailed American pals in policeman's slaying

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**  
**Associated Press**

**ROME (AP)** — Two former schoolmates from California sat impassively in a crowded courtroom Wednesday for the start of their trial for the murder of a plainclothes Italian policeman while they were vacationing in Rome last summer.

In pre-trial court documents, prosecutors alleged that Finnegan Lee Elder, now 20, thrust an 18-centimeter (7-inch) knife repeatedly into Carabinieri Vice Brigadier Mario Cerciello, while his friend, Gabriel Natale-Hjorth, now 19, scuffled with the officer's partner. The jailed defendants have contended they didn't realize the officers were plainclothes police but mistook them for criminals following a thwarted cocaine sale hours earlier in a Rome nightlife district.

Just a row behind them, also listening intently but similarly showing little emotion, was the widow of Cerciello, who was killed on a street near the young Americans' hotel only days after he returned to duty after his honeymoon.

The killer "thrust numerous blows into his vital organs and fled, heedless to Cerciello dying," said Prosecutor Marina Sabina Calabretta. Elder, according to pre-trial documents, admitted to the stabbing but said he



**Gabriel Natale Hjorth attends the opening of the trial for the killing of Italian policeman Mario Cerciello Rega in Rome, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.**

**Associated Press**

acted in self-defense when he feared the burly Cerciello was strangling him. The defense on Wednesday sought to raise doubts about whether the defendants were mistreated or intimidated when first brought from their hotel for questioning at a station house.

Natale-Hjorth has also told authorities he acted in self-defense, alleging that he and his friend were assaulted by the police officers, so he scuffled with Cerciello's partner, Andrea Varriale. The partner suffered kicks and scratches, according to prosecutors.

Under Italian law, accomplices to an alleged murderer can also be charged with the murder itself. Italy's stiffest criminal punishment is life imprisonment.

At the trial, Ethan and Leah Elder sat tensely in a back row, leaning forward to see their son. But their view was largely blocked by armed penitentiary police officers who stood behind the defendants at all times.

When the defendants were led out of the courtroom during a recess, one of the defense lawyers asked if the parents, who live in San Francisco, could greet their son. Ethan Elder took a few steps, touched his son lightly on the arm, and pulling his wife's head close to his, stroked her hair in a gesture of affection their child could glimpse. He held up his hand in greeting, first to Natale-Hjorth, then to their son.

"With the truth will come justice," Ethan Elder said to reporters. □

## Spain opens talks with Catalonia over separatist conflict



**Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, left, shakes hands with Catalan regional President Quim Torra at the Moncloa palace in Madrid, Spain, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.**

**Associated Press**

By **BERNAT ARMANGUE**  
and **JOSEPH WILSON**  
**Associated Press**

**MADRID (AP)** — The Spanish government and the separatist leaders of Catalonia formally opened talks Wednesday on how to resolve the festering political crisis provoked by the region's separatist movement.

As expected, the three-hour meeting between Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and Catalan regional chief Quim Torra and their teams did not lead to any major breakthroughs. The two governments issued a joint statement afterward that they had agreed to continue meeting every month, alternating between Madrid and Barcelona, the home to the regional Catalan

government. Torra repeated his demands for northeastern Catalonia to be allowed to hold an independence referendum and for the release of nine separatist leaders who are serving prison sentences for their role in an illegal 2017 secession attempt.

"We have had an honest and frank debate, an open debate that has made clear the discrepancies between the two sides," Torra said after the meeting. "We made it clear that these are talks to deal with the political conflict in Catalonia that is based on the issues of self-determination and amnesty (for separatist prisoners), and we still don't have an answer from the Spanish government." □



# Duterte says Philippines can survive without America

By JIM GOMEZ

Associated Press

**MANILA, Philippines (AP)** —

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday said Filipino forces can fight insurgents and Muslim extremists without American military help, in a defense of his recent decision to terminate a U.S. security pact. Duterte also said in a speech that he would stick to a decision made early in his presidency, when he was enraged by then President Barack Obama's criticism of his deadly anti-drug crackdown, that he will not travel to the United States. The brash Philippine leader has often criticized U.S. security policies while praising China and Russia since taking office in mid-2016 for a six-year term.

U.S. President Donald Trump invited Duterte to join a meeting he will host for leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Las Vegas next month. Duterte has better relations with Trump than with Obama, but his remarks Wednesday support an earlier statement by his spokesman that he would not attend the Las Vegas meeting.

"Do we need America to survive as a nation?" Duterte asked. "Do we need ... the might and power of the military of the United States to fight our rebellion here and the terror-



In this Feb. 25, 2020 photo provided by the Malacanang Presidential Photographers Division, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte delivers his speech during the Presidential Security Group Change of Command ceremony at the PSG Compound in Malacañang Park, Manila, Philippines. Associated Press

ists down south and control drugs?"

"The military and police said, 'Sir, we can do it,'" he said.

"If we can't do it, we have no business being a republic," Duterte said. "You might as well choose. We can be a territory of the Americans or we can be a province of China."

The Philippine government notified the U.S. two weeks ago that it intends to end the Visiting Forces Agreement, which allows American forces to train in large

numbers in the Philippines, in the most serious threat under Duterte to the two nations' 69-year treaty alliance.

The termination takes effect after 180 days unless both sides agree to keep the VFA. The waiting period allows the allies to renegotiate contentious terms of the 1998 agreement.

The accord allows the entry and temporary stay of American forces along with U.S. military ships and aircraft for joint training with Filipino troops. The

maneuvers include annual drills that Philippine security officials have credited with helping beat back communist insurgents nationwide and Islamic State group-aligned Muslim militants in the southern Philippines.

The VFA specifies which country has jurisdiction over American soldiers who are accused of crimes while in the Philippines, a sensitive issue in the former American colony.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper has called the

decision by the Duterte administration "unfortunate." Trump, however, reacted dismissively, saying, "If they would like to do that, that's fine. We'll save a lot of money."

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr., who signed the notice of termination at Duterte's direction, has proposed a review of the agreement to fix contentious issues instead of abrogating it.

Duterte threatened to terminate the agreement after Washington reportedly canceled the U.S. visa of a loyal ally, Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, who was linked to human rights violations when he enforced the president's deadly anti-drug crackdown as national police chief in 2016.

Duterte gave the U.S. a month to restore dela Rosa's visa, but U.S. officials have not publicly reacted to his demand.

Thousands of mostly poor suspects have been killed under Duterte's campaign against illegal drugs, alarming the U.S. and other Western governments and human rights groups.

Duterte rejected on Wednesday what he said was the portrayal by some U.S. officials of his administration as persecuting a detained opposition senator and being incapable of investigating extrajudicial killings. □

## Victims of New Delhi's deadly communal clashes fill hospital

By SHEIKH SAALIQ and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL

Associated Press

**NEW DELHI (AP)** — Patients on stretchers crammed the emergency room, while relatives of the dead wailed outside a morgue as injured people continued to pour into a public hospital after three days of clashes between religious groups that coincided with President Donald Trump's visit to India.

At least 20 people were killed in the clashes, including at least one police official and an intelligence bureau officer, and nearly 200 people were injured, both



Indian paramilitary force soldiers patrol as an ambulance stationed at the area which witnessed Tuesday's violence in New Delhi, India, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020. Associated Press

Hindus and Muslims, in the Indian capital in decades. On Wednesday, victims'

relatives stood outside the mortuary, some crying as they waited for hospital authorities to release the bodies following postmortems. Rahul Solanki, a 26-year-old Hindu, died from a gunshot wound, according to his family. His younger brother, Rohit Solanki, said he was shot walking to a shop to buy milk.

The corridors of the Guru Teg Bahadur hospital at New Delhi's eastern border are often crowded, but on Wednesday hundreds thronged its wards as doctors worked through the night to treat injuries. Mohammad Akram

watched as his 17-year-old son was wheeled out of an operating theater after surgery for a bullet wound in his chest.

The teenager said he was shot on his family's apartment terrace as he watched Hindu mobs enter his neighborhood.

New patients continued to pour into the hospital on stretchers. Those with head injuries were wheeled to the overcrowded emergency room.

Mohammad Akbar made it to the hospital with his head bleeding profusely after he was attacked early Wednesday. □



# Zimbabwe's rural elderly battle hunger amid severe drought

By FARAI MUTSAKA

Associated Press

**MUDZI, Zimbabwe (AP)** —

Living alone in Zimbabwe's arid Mudzi district, Leah Tsiga's best friend is her cat. But when it comes to food, each has to look for their own and the 90-year-old Tsiga often comes second best.

The crafty feline forages in nearby bushes for rats, birds, insects and worms. As for the frail Tsiga, she sometimes goes for days without a solid meal, as Zimbabwe is ravaged by a combination of drought and deepening economic crisis.

Tsiga ate porridge the previous night, her first meal in two days, she said.

"I approached one of my neighbors who felt pity for me and gave me a bowl of mealie-meal and some sugar for the porridge," she told The Associated Press, sitting outside her round, grass-thatched hut.

She used to get help from her three children, but they are battling to make ends meet because of Zimbabwe's high unemployment. "They all went to Harare (the capital) to look for jobs," said Tsiga. "They are also struggling. So it's just me and my cat here," she said.

Zimbabwe is among the world's most food insecure countries with more than half of the its 15 million people in need of food assistance, according to U.N.'s World Food Program.

A drought, described by experts as the most severe in decades and worsened by climate change, has seen large numbers of rural farmers unable to grow adequate food.

A debilitating economic crisis that has seen Zimbabwe's annual inflation spike to 500% — second only to that in Venezuela — has worsened the situation and left millions of people desperate for survival.

In Mudzi, about 230 kilometers (143 miles) northeast of Harare, the situation is palpably dire and it has especially hit the elderly. Making up about 4% of Zimbabwe's population, they are often neglected by family mem-



In this Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020, Leah Tsiga, stands outside her thatched hut with an empty basket in Mudzi about 230 Kilometers, northeast of the Zimbabwean capital Harare.

Associated Press

bers, don't get enough support from the government and must keep farming their small patches of land. Many are reliant upon international food aid.

Walking bent over with a cane, 89-year-old Sophia Chatundumura said she had to hike about 5 kilometers (3 miles) to reach the point where food aid was distributed because her grandchildren were away at school.

"I can't ask for help from my neighbors because they also have nothing," she said.

The international food assistance is targeting "the most vulnerable groups, the elderly whom we expect not to work in the fields or to get enough harvest to take them throughout the year," said Never Chituwu, an official with World Vision, an international charity that participated in the food distribution. He added that many elderly are taking care of orphans.

Of the 134,000 people in Mudzi district, more than half are in urgent need of food assistance, said the local district administrator, Robert Mzezewa, adding that many younger people have resorted to the often violent small-scale gold mining to survive.

The World Food Program is assisting 3.5 million people across the once-prosper-



In this Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020 photo, women carry bags of corn they received as food aid, in Mudzi about 230 Kilometers northeast of the Zimbabwean capital Harare.

Associated Press

ous nation with food until April when people are expected to harvest this year's crop, said Claire Neville, a communications officer with the organization. But that's assuming there will be something to harvest.

Rains have been sparse this year and staple crops such as maize and sorghum are stunted and wilting across the district, a few kilometers (miles) from Mozambique, another country hard hit by the drought. Many people did not even plant due to the erratic rains and large swathes of land lie fallow.

"It is becoming difficult to depend on the rains these days. Mudzi had rains in December, followed by a sudden dry spell lasting 23 days. The rains returned

briefly in January, but it was too late for the crops, and farmers," said Godfrey Mboweni, a government agronomist.

"As climate change is intensifying, Zimbabwe and indeed all of southern Africa is a prime example of people suffering most from climate change," said Neville, the WFP officer.

Many shops in the district were closed while those still operating had just a trickle of customers as few people have money to buy food items, even when they are available in shops.

The WFP says it wants to scale up assistance to reach more than 4 million people in Zimbabwe, although 7.7 million people are in need. The agency says it requires over \$200

million for food assistance in Zimbabwe but so far has raised just half of that amount.

Nearly 1,000 people of all ages gathered at Nakiwa village in Mudzi, to receive monthly food rations.

Before the distribution, people prayed and then recited slogans for smart agriculture strategies they learned in training workshops.

The elderly became the butt of friendly banter to lighten the mood among people sitting on stones and under the shade of small jatropa trees to escape the searing heat.

"This is not a modelling show, walk faster you girls," shouted one woman to three grannies limping their way to the food distribution point. People burst out in laughter, before lining up behind the old women to collect rations of cow peas (black-eyed peas), maize meal and vegetable oil.

The elderly women also chuckled ruefully, masking their fatigue after walking several kilometers (miles).

"There is too much hunger here ... I can no longer cope," one of them, 61-year old Mavis Pawandiwa later told AP, breaking down several times and battling to contain her tears.

After receiving her food rations, Tsiga, the old woman with the cat, returned home to cook sadza, a stiff porridge made from ground maize that she had received. To go with it, she cooked leaves from the pigweed (amaranthus) and okra growing among a faltering pearl millet crop in her small field.

"It is not old age that will kill me, it is hunger," said Tsiga, as her cat, seemingly on a full stomach, slept contentedly nearby. □

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# Brazil confirms first coronavirus case in Latin America

By **MARCELO DE SOUSA** and **MAURICIO SAVARESE**  
**Associated Press**

**RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)** — Brazil's government confirmed on Wednesday that a 61-year-old Brazilian man who traveled to Italy this month has Latin America's first confirmed case of the new coronavirus spreading worldwide.

"We will now see how this virus behaves in a tropical country in the middle of summer, how its behavior pattern will be," Brazil's Health Minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta said in a press conference.

The Brazilian man spent two weeks in northern Italy's Lombardy region on a work trip, where he contracted the contagious virus, the Health Ministry said.

Authorities had already said Tuesday evening that a first laboratory test for the COVID-19 virus had a positive result, and were waiting for a second test to confirm it.

Since the virus began to spread throughout the world from China, Brazil and other countries in the region have registered dozens of suspected cases, all of which previously had been discarded following tests.

According to the Health Ministry, the man began to



**Airport employees wear masks as a precaution against the spread of the new coronavirus COVID-19 as they work at the Sao Paulo International Airport in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.**

show symptoms compatible with the illness, such as a dry cough, throat pain and flu symptoms. Lombardy is the epicenter of the outbreak in Italy, and there have been hundreds of confirmed cases there as well as several deaths.

Sao Paulo's Albert Einstein Institute, where the man received medical attention, carried out respiratory tests, and the Adolfo Lutz Institute in the same city carried out the subsequent test confirming the virus. The man

was in stable condition and in isolation at home in Sao Paulo.

Brazil's national health agency Anvisa has been working to map all contact the man had with others, and on Tuesday requested the manifest of the flight he took to investigate other possible cases.

The Health Ministry said that the man received some 30 family members at his home after returning to Sao Paulo on Feb. 21. Those people are under observa-

tion, as are with passengers from the plane.

"Our healthcare system has already undergone grave respiratory epidemics before," Mandetta said. "We will get through this situation, investing in science, research and clear information."

Residents of the biggest city in Latin America were beginning to acknowledging the risks of an epidemic. Thiago Alves, the manager of drugstore in central Sao Paulo, said he had sold

more than 3,000 masks on Wednesday.

"We are already short and it isn't even the beginning of the afternoon," he said.

Attendance was light at many schools in downtown Sao Paulo and there were few customers in Chinese shops and restaurants.

Sao Paulo's stock exchange, which had been closed since Friday due to the Carnival holiday, was down 5% shortly after 2 p.m., which economist André Perfeito attributed to "the global outbreak of coronavirus, not necessarily its arrival here." Global stock markets had dipped sharply while the Brazilian exchange was closed.

Four years ago, Latin America's largest country found itself under the microscope as the spreading Zika virus was linked to cases of microcephaly in babies just ahead of the summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil's response was deemed adequate by international organizations and its public health care system handled most cases, though medicine was in short supply in many isolated areas of the Northeast region. Some foreign sports fans and competitors still canceled their plans to attend South America's first Olympics. □

**Associated Press**

## Ex-DEA agent, wife, to leave Puerto Rico, face trial in U.S.

By **DANICA COTO**  
**Associated Press**

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)** — A former anti-drug agent and his wife, charged with diverting money from the Drug Enforcement Administration and aiding Colombian traffickers, on Wednesday agreed to have their case held in the U.S. mainland. José Irizarry clasped the leg of Nathalia Gómez-Irizarry as the couple sat quietly in Puerto Rico's federal court for an hour before the hearing, barely talking. They face a 19-count federal indictment in which Irizarry is accused of conspiring to launder millions in drug



**This June 13, 2016 file photo shows Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents in Florida.**

**Associated Press**

proceeds diverted from the DEA.

He joined the agency in Miami in 2009 and re-

peatedly won praise from superiors. He resigned in January 2018 after being transferred from Colombia

to Washington. The couple declined to speak and left the federal courtroom after the hearing.

"They are covered by the presumption of innocence," defense attorney José Novas told The Associated Press, declining further comment.

The couple were arrested in Puerto Rico last week and released on \$10,000 bond each. They are now scheduled to appear in court in Florida next month in a case whose star witness is a former DEA informant.

Irizarry is accused of filing false reports starting around 2011 and alleg-

edly ordered DEA staff to wire money slated for undercover stings to international accounts he controlled.

Authorities also accused him of sharing sensitive law enforcement information with co-conspirators, including a Colombian public official and an alleged drug trafficker and money launderer who is godfather to the couple's children.

Some of the money allegedly was used to buy a \$30,000 Tiffany diamond ring, a 2017 Lamborghini Huracan Spyder and a home in Puerto Rico, where the couple had been living. □



# LOCAL



## The NEW Tierra del Sol Restaurant: A fresh contemporary scenic surprise



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They call it Aruba's first "Premium Casual Dining" experience. It does do right to that concept but there is so much more to it. The restaurant at Tierra del Sol transformed into a place of light, fresh looks, elegant though laid-back setting and the choice between inside and outside dining. Those two areas flow into each other in a natural way. Families with children dine on the big tables, some business men take a quick bite inside and a group of golfers enjoy a meal after their game. It is a fantastic concept that is accessible for all without losing its essence: great food in a stylish interior design.

Inspired by nature the restaurant is letting in the outside while the menu reflects what guests are looking for nowadays: variation, adults & kid's choices, great prices with rapid and friendly service.

12 Appetizers, 3 soups, 8 salad bowls, homemade pastas (5) and pizzas (4), 13 wraps- sandwiches-burgers, 8 entrees (2 sides included), a kids menu and of course sweets make up for an extensive card with something for everyone. A beverage menu offers 11 beers and drafts, homemade sangria, bubbles and wines, premium cocktails and spirits. You can keep coming back and try something else every time.

"Casual dining is hot in the United States now because people do not always want to dress up, sit for hours on a table and get a big check presented at the end. We give an answer to the need of quality food in a modern, cool environment with friendly prices and quick service," says Marketing & Sales Executive, Ghislaine de Windt K. In short: you can't go wrong. Come and try it out.☐



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## What's going on?

by Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

**ORANJESTAD** — Isn't it amazing that hardly anyone in a business or office environment really dares to say loudly and openly "Hey, what's going on?" What does that have to do with business or an office? Nothing! What does it have to do with us? Everything! We may be servants, entrepreneurs, professionals or politicians, yet, we are also humans. We are dealing with customers or constituents who are also people, just like us. We all have feelings, don't we? Or, am I missing something? It is important to express yourself openly.

As I'm working at my laptop I have my earphones on my head and listen to Marvin



Gaye's song "What's going on". Remember the lyrics? "Mother, mother, there's too many of you crying...; Brother, brother...; Father, father..." And most important the chorus: "You know we've got to find a way, to bring some lovin' here today. What's going on,

etc." Swaying to the music, thinking, writing, every now and then pausing while staring out of the window over the Caribbean Sea on this sunny day as I'm creating this article.

### Essentials

Let me tell you about some essentials. It is about friends. We all have friends, don't we? In the working environment as well as in our private lives. Sometimes friends are close by, sometimes far away. However, we miss the opportunities to get in touch or to meet. Yet, the days go by and weeks rush on and before we know it, a year is gone. We know that we like each other but never see each other. No, we are too busy and too tired. Tired of playing foolish games trying to make money or to make a name for ourselves.

We tell ourselves that we will call our friend tomorrow just to say that we were thinking of him or her. But tomorrow comes and tomorrow goes and the distance between us grows and grows. The quintessence? Reach out and tell friends what they mean to you. Seize the day, because by postponing and by the time you decide to actually make the connection, it may be too late and you have either lost something that was dear to you or you may have missed a valuable opportunity.

### Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it

Remember to always say what you mean. Don't be afraid to express yourself. So, if you like something, tell it. If you don't, don't hold back either. That is what sincerity is about. Funny, isn't it? Animals do it. Children do it. Adult people don't. They are educated, civilized and have learned how to play games with feelings; their own and of others. You are not allowed to show emotions. Just smile, even if it is fake. No matter if you have menstrual pains or if you have loved one at home who really would need you

there. Keep a smile on your face and don't dare to show even a watery eye because it may be interpreted as a weakness. So, you must learn to cry with dry eyes. How do you feel? Who cares! The show and the business must go on! But, wait a minute. Aren't we also humans? Don't we have a life?

### Adapt some of it in your life

We should listen more often to artists. Long ago in Art Classes, I learned that Art is meaningful realization of feelings. So, what do artists do? For one they make a good amount of money by providing entertainment. And what is it that they give you? An opportunity to laugh with them or to cry with them, to listen or view their story, be it happy or sad, to dance on their music, to read their rhymes or to watch them how they express themselves in paintings or sculptures. And we like it.

We want to share emotions and feelings. We want to escape from holding back. That is why we turn on the TV after work or go to a party on Saturday night. Why can't we show our feelings at work? Show our own art. Have someone to talk to about our sadness. Laugh to the point that it becomes contagious. Walk in a different way or take a different path. Wear a flower in your hair. Have a happy feeling. What will people think of you? "Man, this is the greatest person I've been with and just makes me feel awesome." That's what they will think of you.

### You've got a friend

Let's go back to the essence of calling an old friend. You have to make that call or send an email to make "the magic" work. As I progress writing this, I'm listening to a song by James Taylor called "You've got a friend". Just read the lyrics, you don't have to sing them; you may not have a good voice for singing anyway.

Continued on Page 15



## EPICUREAN NIGHT

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## What's going on?

Continued from Page 14

When you're down and troubled  
and you need a helping hand and  
nothing is going right. Close your  
eyes and think of me and soon I will  
be there!

People can be so cold, they'll hurt  
you and desert you. They'll take your  
soul if you let them. But don't you let  
them!

If the sky above you should turn  
dark and full of clouds and that old  
north wind should begin to blow,  
Keep your head together and call  
my name out loud and soon I will be  
knocking upon your door.

You just call out my name and you  
know wherever I am I'll come running  
to see you again. Winter Spring sum-  
mer or fall, all you've got to do is call!  
Ain't it good to know you've got a  
friend? You've got a friend!

The last three lines were the chorus  
which is sung several times to put the  
emphasis on what you have to do.  
You've got to send that message or  
make that call.

Don't let it become: "If the phone  
wasn't ringing, it was me". □



### About the author:

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert is the Chairman and Coordinator of the Caribbean Aviation Meetup, an annual results and solution oriented conference for stakeholders of 'airlift' in the Caribbean which will be held June 16-18 on St. Maarten. Mr. Slabbaert's background is accentuated by aviation business development, strategic communication, and journalism.



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fect pairing. You are welcome to enjoy the Happy Hours and Daily Early Birds from 5 to 7 PM. Bon appé-

tite!  
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## Loyal visitors for more than 10 and 20 years



**EAGLE BEACH —** Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba and Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The Distinguished visitor certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 10 years and more consecutively. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were **Douglas Belanger** as a Distinguished Visitor of Aruba. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate went

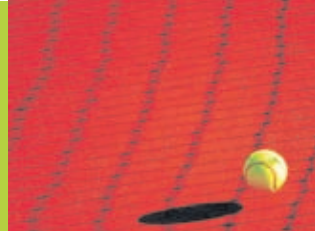
to three people! Cynthia Graham-Belanger and couple Robert and Cathy Preston, all from USA.

These lovely people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its safety, and Aruba's warm and friendly people who have become like family to them.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Divi Tamarijn All Inclusive Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



# SPORTS



## AP Interviews: Swimmers concerned Olympics will be canceled

By **ANDREW DAMPF**  
AP Sports Writer  
NAPLES, Italy (AP) —

If any thoughts were creeping into their minds that the Tokyo Olympics might be canceled because of a viral outbreak, elite swimmers Katinka Hosszú, Chad le Clos and Sarah Sjöström certainly didn't show it during a strenuous two-hour training session Wednesday.

It was only after the three swimmers — who have won 11 Olympic medals between them — stepped out of the pool that they revealed serious concerns over the fate of the games during a series of interviews with The Associated Press.

"For the athletes the best (solution) is just to focus on your preparation. ... I see the news, but in my mind I'm prepared until it's on. So I have to be ready," said Hosszú, whose nickname is "The Iron Lady."

Tokyo Olympic organizers and the Japanese government responded Wednesday to comments made by former International Olympic Committee vice president Dick Pound, who said the 2020 Games could be canceled if the virus isn't contained.

"Our basic thoughts are that we will go ahead with the Olympic and Paralympic Games as scheduled," Tokyo organizing committee CEO Toshiro Muto said in an abruptly called a news conference.

Continued on Page 18

# GAME SET MATCH!



## Sharapova retires from tennis

In this Sept. 16, 2017, file photo, Maria Sharapova arrives at the Los Angeles premiere of "Battle of the Sexes" in Los Angeles.

Associated Press  
Page 20



# The Honda Classic is much more than 'The Bear Trap'

By **TIM REYNOLDS**

AP Sports Writer

**PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. (AP)** — PGA National's signature test is a three-hole span on the back nine called "The Bear Trap," named for Jack Nicklaus and touted as one of the most demanding stretches in all of golf.

The par-3 15th, with water down the right side. The par-4 16th, with the approach over water. The par-3 17th, over water again with a green that's sloped toward trouble. Oh, and the wind is almost always swirling on that part of the golf course. They're daunting on a good day, diabolical on a bad day. And to win The Honda Classic, which starts Thursday at PGA National, one needs to worry about much more than those three holes.

The Bear Trap is one thing. The rest of PGA National, that's a bear, too. "There's no easy hole out there," defending champion Keith Mitchell said. The numbers make that abundantly clear. PGA National ranked as the fifth-toughest course to play on the PGA Tour last season, behind tracks that played host to four of what were supposed to be among the year's toughest tournaments. The PGA Championship at Bethpage had

players, on average, shooting 2.5 shots over par per round. The U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, nearly 1.4 shots over par. The World Golf Championships event in China at Sheshan International, 1.3 shots over par. And the British Open at Royal Portrush, 1.2 shots over par.

Next up? The Honda, where players were just over a full shot past par in every round last season. And that meant it was easier than in 2018, when PGA National was the second toughest on tour behind only the U.S.

Open at Shinnecock Hills. "It's a hard golf course," said 2019 U.S. Open champion Gary Woodland. "I think that benefits me. Scores are never going to get too low. Obviously, it's a lot weather-dependent. But it's one of the most mentally demanding golf courses I think we face all year. There's a lot of shots, especially coming down the back nine, that you just have to step up and hit shots. There's really no bail-out." There are a few safe bets for this week at the Honda: Nobody is going to run away with the tournament, and it'll be a shock if someone leaves town Sunday night after carding four rounds in the 60s. This will be the 14th time that the Honda is played on PGA National's Champion course; in the previous 13, four titles were decided in playoffs and only twice did the winner prevail by more than two shots. Nobody had four rounds in the 60s last year or in 2018; only seven players pulled off that feat between 2010 and 2017.



**Rickie Fowler walks on the 17th green during the Pro-Am of the Honda Classic golf tournament, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020, in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.**

Associated Press

Par is never disappointing at PGA National: Last year, players broke par on 17% of their holes played, and gave back at least one stroke 19% of the time.

"The golf course has always been pretty good," said Brooks Koepka, who finished tied for second at the Honda last year and, at No. 3, is the highest-ranked player in this year's field. "It's tough. I like that."

And while the Bear Trap is a problem, none of those holes ranked even among the toughest five on the course last year. The par-4, 479-yard 6th played to an average of 4.37 in last year's tournament, making it the fourth-toughest hole on tour last season.

The par-4, 450-yard 11th, the par-4, 508-yard 10th, the par-4, 465-yard 14th and the par-3, 217-yard fifth all proved tougher than anything in the Bear Trap as well.

But Woodland saw a bright side: The tests this week are a great primer for what looms on the not-too-distant schedule.

"I like getting to be able to hit some shots, some pressure shots before leading up to The Players and the Masters right around the corner," Woodland said. "It's nice for me to get some mental confidence going on a tough golf course." □

## Swimmers

Continued from Page 17

"For the time being, the situation of the coronavirus infection is, admittedly, difficult to predict, but we will take measures such that we'll have a safe Olympic and Paralympic Games."

More than 80,000 people have been infected and more than 2,700 killed since the viral outbreak began in China — with the bulk of them in that country. Five deaths in Japan have been attributed to the virus.

The Olympics are scheduled to open on July 24.

"Honestly there is no really good option if it's

canceled," Hosszú said, adding "postponing is definitely better than altogether cancel."

With the virus spreading in northern Italy, Hosszú moved up her departure from Naples by two days to Thursday.

Le Clos, who calls himself a "germophobe," said he always travels with a face mask.

"We have to just not shake too many hands, not touch too much stuff," the South African said in an interview arranged through his sponsor, Arena. "It's a terrible thing that's happened. Hopefully it can get cured soon and we're going to proceed to the



**Hungarian swimmer Katinka Hosszú listens to questions during an interview with The Associated Press, in Naples, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.**

Associated Press

Olympics.

"Obviously I don't want it to be canceled, but if it gets canceled I will train another

six months or another year," Le Clos added. "My approach is not just to Tokyo, I'm looking beyond

that." Sjöström was supposed to swim at a meet in Milan this weekend that was canceled because of the spread of the virus in northern Italy.

"Of course, it's definitely on my mind," Sjöström said. "We are reminded about it every day. I read the news. It's a bit scary."

"People are traveling so much, even me, so that's why the virus is spreading," the Swedish swimmer added. "I hope we can calm it down very, very soon."

The swimmers were taking part in a training camp for the Energy Standard team coached by James Gibson.

Hosszú, who is not part of the team, was invited as a guest. □



# NFL, players move closer to new CBA, but deal not done yet

By **DAVE CAMPBELL**  
**AP Pro Football Writer**

The NFL and its players have moved closer to a new collective bargaining agreement and the next decade of labor peace that would come with it. If the process is at first-and-goal now, though, there's still work to be done to get into the end zone.

With a late-night vote, on the slim majority approval of the 32 team representatives, the NFL Players Association was preparing Wednesday to send the current CBA proposal to the full union membership for potential ratification.

"There will be white smoke when there is white smoke," NFLPA president Eric Winston told reporters in Indianapolis during the NFL scouting combine.

"The one thing we're not doing is rushing though this thing. Every 'I' will be dotted, every 'T' will be crossed, and when that happens, that happens."

The NFLPA's 11-member executive board initially voted down the proposal last week by a slim majority, an indication of mixed feelings within the ranks that count more than 2,000 players. Though a simple majority of votes cast among the membership is the only requirement for ratification, plenty of players have spoken in opposition to the current proposal.

"We should not rush the next 10 years for today's satisfaction," Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson said Wednesday on Twitter as he declared he'd vote no and, in a familiar refrain from NFL players over the years, referenced the benefits and protections of NBA and MLB players as benchmarks for the NFLPA to aim for.

The owners, however, have so far indicated disinterest in reopening negotiations. The current CBA expires after the 2020 season, but getting a deal done so far ahead of time would give the league better leverage with the various television networks and media platforms in negotiating deals for a

new round of broadcast rights. When talks stalled during the previous iteration of CBA discussions, the league wound up initiating a lockout at the start of the 2011 league year. Players disbanded the union in order to sue the NFL in federal court, before the two sides ultimately came together that summer and struck the deal for the current CBA without any games lost and just a slight delay for the opening of training camps. According to a person with knowledge of the negotiations, speaking on condition of anonymity because of their confidential nature, the NFL and the NFLPA agreed Wednesday to operate the offseason for now under the provisions of the current agreement

until a new CBA is ratified. That's important because of certain, unique rules for the final year of the CBA, including how teams can use franchise and transition tags on players whose contracts have expired. The window for tagging will open Thursday, two days later than originally scheduled, and close the week before free agency begins March 18. If a new CBA is enacted before then, the new rules would supersede the old ones.

"If there's a CBA done, we can do certain things, and if there's not, we're going to play under these rules and we can do these things," Detroit Lions general manager Bob Quinn said at the combine. "So we have kind of two scenarios that we



In this Dec. 8, 2019, file photo, Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson speaks during a news conference after an NFL football game against the Los Angeles Rams in Los Angeles. Associated Press

always look at. We put potential guys that we might go after, put them in both buckets and kind of see how they kind of shape up in terms of contracts. But as

you know, the negotiating period is a couple weeks away, so we'll kind of see what the market is on some of these positions we'll go after." □

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# Sharapova retires from tennis at age 32 with 5 Slam titles

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**  
AP Tennis Writer

Maria Sharapova was a transcendent star in tennis from the time she was a teenager, someone whose grit and groundstrokes earned her a career Grand Slam and whose off-court success included millions of dollars more in endorsement deals than prize money.

And yet, Sharapova walked away from her sport rather quietly Wednesday at the age of 32, ending a career that featured five major championships, time at No. 1 in the WTA rankings, a 15-month doping ban and plenty of problems with her right shoulder.

There was no goodbye tournament, no last moment in the spotlight, for someone so used to garnering so much attention for so long, with or without a racket in hand.

"I've been pretty good in the past, balancing my time with my sponsors with my tennis, because I know my priority. At the end of the day, what I love doing is competing, and that's where my heart is at: on center court," Sharapova said in a 2006 interview with The Associated Press right before that year's U.S. Open.

"There are a couple of sides of me," she said then. "There's the Maria that's a tennis player. There's the Maria that is a normal girl. And there's the Maria



In this July 7, 2014, file photo, Russia's Maria Sharapova reacts after defeating Romania's Simona Halep during their final match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium, in Paris, France.

Associated Press

who's a businesswoman. And that's where the 'Maria Sharapova brand' comes into play."

Around that time, she signed a "lifetime" contract with a racket company, a deal that eventually was ended. And two weeks after that, she would win the U.S. Open trophy while wearing an outfit that resembled a sparkly black cocktail dress, part of the "couple of sides" persona she cultivated.

Two years later, though, Sharapova missed the tournament at Flushing Meadows because she needed surgery on her shoulder, which has troubled her off and on ever since; she had

another operation on that joint in 2019.

She lost the last four matches she played at major tournaments, with first-round exits in her past three appearances, including at the Australian Open in January. That turned out to be the last match of her career and made her 0-2 this season.

In an essay written for Vanity Fair and Vogue about her decision to retire, posted online Wednesday, Sharapova asks: "How do you leave behind the only life you've ever known?"

She disclosed that she "had a procedure to numb my shoulder to get through the match" a half-hour be-

fore walking on court for a first-round exit at last year's U.S. Open, writing: "I share this not to garner pity, but to paint my new reality: My body had become a distraction." Born in Russia, and "discovered" by Martina Navratilova at an exhibition event in Moscow, Sharapova moved to Florida as a child and trained at the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy.

"We'll miss her, baby. She's very special," Bollettieri told the AP in an interview last year, when Sharapova returned to his academy as she worked her way back from her latest shoulder procedure. "The tour will miss her. ... Always compet-

itive. All business." Sharapova burst onto the tennis scene at 17 by upsetting Serena Williams to win Wimbledon in 2004. She would beat Williams again at that year's season-ending tour championship to improve to 2-1 against the American — and never won another one of their matchups, dropping the next 19 in a row.

Powerful at the baseline, and famous for a never-give-up attitude, Sharapova reached No. 1 for the first time at 18 in 2005. After adding her second major trophy at the U.S. Open the following year, she collected an Australian Open title in 2008, and then won the French Open in 2012 and 2014. Sharapova is one of only six women in the professional era to win each major tennis title at least once. She made 10 Grand Slam finals in all, going 5-5; the last came in 2015 at the Australian Open, where she was the runner-up to Williams. At the 2016 Australian Open, where Williams beat her in the quarterfinals, Sharapova tested positive for the newly banned drug meldonium.

After initially being given a two-year suspension, Sharapova appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which reduced the penalty, ruling she bore "less than significant fault" in the case and could not "be considered to be an intentional doper." □



Serbia's Novak Djokovic shoots the ball to Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber during a match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.

Associated Press

## Top-ranked Djokovic, Tsitsipas reach Dubai quarterfinals

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)** — Top-ranked Novak Djokovic beat German veteran Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 6-1 Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of the Dubai Championships and remain unbeaten in 2020.

Djokovic broke for a 4-2 lead in the first set and went 4-0 up in the second before wrapping up the win in 59 minutes. The Serb is 15-0 this year, including six wins at the ATP Cup

and his run to the Australian Open title.

"It was a great performance," Djokovic said. "I enjoyed the way I played, coming out with the right focus and tactics."

Djokovic will next face seventh-seeded Karen Khachanov of Russia, who beat Austrian qualifier Dennis Novak 6-3, 6-4.

Second-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated Alexander Bublik 7-6 (1), 6-4 to set up a meeting with Jan-

Lennard Struff, who needed just 39 minutes to ease past Nikoloz Basilashvili 6-1, 6-0.

Third-seeded Gael Monfils of France took his winning streak to 11 matches by ousting qualifier Yasutaka Uchiyama 6-1, 6-2. Monfils is coming off victories at Rotterdam and Montpellier.

He will face fellow Frenchman Richard Gasquet, who ousted No. 8 Benoit Paire 6-4, 6-4. □



## Bucks get 50th win, beat Raptors in East finals rematch

By The Associated Press

**TORONTO (AP)** — Giannis Antetokounmpo had 19 points and 19 rebounds, Khris Middleton scored 22 points and the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Toronto Raptors 108-97 on Tuesday night in a matchup between the top teams in the Eastern Conference.

Eric Bledsoe scored 17 points and Brook Lopez had 15 as the NBA-leading Bucks won their fourth straight and 18th of 20. Milwaukee (50-8) was playing the second game of a back-to-back after winning in overtime at Washington Monday.

Behind by 12 points late in the second quarter, the Bucks rallied to beat the Raptors in their first game in Toronto since losing Game 6 of the Eastern Conference finals last May, completing a disappointing collapse after winning the first two games of that series at home.

Pascal Siakam scored 22 points and Fred VanVleet had 14 as the defending NBA champion Raptors lost for the second time in 19 games. Toronto was beaten at home for the first time since Jan. 12 against San Antonio, ending a nine-game run.

### LAKERS 118, PELICANS 109

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — LeBron James had 40 points and eight rebounds in his first career meeting with Zion Williamson while leading Los Angeles to its sixth straight victory. Anthony Davis had 21 points and 14 rebounds to remain unbeaten in his three meetings with his former team this season. In the Lakers' first game after an emotional memorial service for Kobe Bryant at Staples Center on Monday, James opened up a close contest with back-to-back buckets at the rim with about three minutes left. Danny Green sealed it for Los Angeles with his fifth 3-pointer with 51 seconds to play. Williamson had 29 points and six rebounds in his first career

showdown with James and Davis, his predecessor as the Pelicans' centerpiece. In his 13th NBA game, Williamson scored at least 20 points for the ninth consecutive time, but managed only one field goal in the fourth quarter.

### CELTICS 118, TRAIL BLAZERS 106

**PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)** — Jayson Tatum had 36 points, including a career-high eight 3-pointers, and Boston beat Portland.

Jaylen Brown added 24 points for the Celtics, who sit in third in the Eastern Conference behind the first-place Milwaukee Bucks and the Toronto Raptors.

Tatum had 26 points in the second half alone as the Celtics built a 19-point lead in the fourth quarter. The Blazers, playing without All-Star Damian Lillard, couldn't keep up. All of Tatum's points came from the floor, as he did not go to the line once in the game. CJ McCollum had 28 points and 10 assists for the Trail Blazers. Hassan Whiteside added 18 points and 19 rebounds.

### THUNDER 124, BULLS 122

**CHICAGO (AP)** — Dennis Schroder scored 21 points and made a huge defensive play in the fourth quarter, helping Oklahoma City top Chicago for its fourth consecutive win.

Oklahoma City blew a 24-point lead but recovered in time to earn its ninth straight victory on the road, breaking a Thunder record. Danilo Gallinari scored 24 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 21 points and 11 rebounds, and Chris Paul finished with 19 points and nine assists. The Bulls wasted a pair of stellar performances from Zach LaVine and rookie reserve Coby White. LaVine scored 27 of his 41 points in the second half, and White had a career-high 35 in his third consecutive game over 30 points. Chicago lost for the ninth time in 10 games.

### PACERS 119, HORNETS 80

**INDIANAPOLIS (AP)** —



New Orleans Pelicans' Zion Williamson (1) looks on from under the basket during free throws next to Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James (23) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Domantas Sabonis had 21 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists to lead Indiana over Charlotte.

T.J. Warren scored 15 of his 19 points in the first half and Justin Holiday had 16 points for the short-handed Pacers (34-24), who bounced back from a blowout in Toronto for a third win in four games.

Miles Bridges scored 17 points and Caleb Martin had 11 for the Hornets (19-38), who have lost two in a

row after a stretch of three straight wins — all on the road.

### NUGGETS 115, PISTONS 98

**DENVER (AP)** — Jerami Grant scored a career-high 29 points and Nikola Jokic had a season-best four steals to help healthy Denver beat Detroit.

At 40-18, the Nuggets are tied for their best start through 58 games in their NBA franchise history. They had the same mark a season ago on their way to

winding up with the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference.

Jokic added 16 points in a game where Denver led by as many as 15 points in the third quarter, had it cut to single digits and pulled away in the fourth to remain the second seed in the West. Derrick Rose and Christian Wood each had 20 points for Detroit. Rose has now scored 20 or more points a team-high 25 times this season. □

## Hornets' Monk suspended indefinitely for drug violation

By STEVE REED

AP Sports Writer

**CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)** —

Hornets guard Malik Monk has been suspended without pay for violating the terms of the NBA/NBPA anti-drug program.

The suspension begins with Wednesday night's game against the New York Knicks and will continue until he is determined to be in full compliance with the program.

The third-year reserve from Kentucky is averaging 10.3 points and 2.9 rebounds in 21 minutes per game this season. However, he had been playing much better of late, averaging 18.2 points per game in the last seven games.

Monk has played in 191 games during his career



Charlotte Hornets guard Malik Monk, right, celebrates with guard Devonte' Graham (4) after scoring during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Chicago Bulls in Chicago, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. The Hornets won 103-93.

Associated Press

with one start. Hornets coach James Borrego said before the game he hadn't spoken to Monk since learning of the suspension. "Obviously we give him our full support," Borrego said. "It's a situation that, all of us face different things in life. It's how you respond. It's my belief

knowing Malik that he will respond the right way and he has my full support, he has our organization's full support. And it does put us in a bind, but I believe that in the end its going to be a very positive story. I look forward to talking to him, but that's where we're at today." □



# Dallas races to early lead, beats Hurricanes 4-1

By The Associated Press

**RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)** — Roope Hintz had a goal and two assists and the surging Dallas Stars rode a three-goal first period to a 4-1 win over the Carolina Hurricanes on Tuesday night.

Hintz posted a season-high three points and helped Dallas improve to 7-1-1 in its last nine games. The Stars are 6-0-2 in their last eight road games. The Stars also are 20-9-3 since Rick Bowness took over as interim coach after Jim Montgomery was fired on Dec. 10.

Denis Gurianov added a goal and an assist and Tyler Seguin and Jason Dickinson also scored for the Stars. Anton Khudobin stopped 40 shots for Dallas, which won despite being outshot 41-16.

Sebastian Aho scored his 36th goal of the season for the Hurricanes, who are 3-3-1 in their last seven games, including a pair of losses to the Stars.

Alex Nedeljkovic, who was making just his second career NHL start after being recalled from Charlotte of the American Hockey League, made 12 saves for Carolina.

## **CAPITALS 4, JETS 3, SO**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Alex Ovechkin scored his 701st goal and the shootout winner, and Braden Holtby made 30 saves in regulation and overtime to help Washington beat Winnipeg for its second straight win.

Ovechkin, Jakub Vrana and Garnet Hathaway scored to stake Washington to a 3-0 lead.

The Capitals came away with two points anyway after that lead was erased on goals by Nikolaj Ehlers, Kyle Connor and Mark Scheifele.

Ovechkin scored his 43rd of the season two minutes in after a pregame ceremony to commemorate the Russian superstar becoming the eighth member of the NHL's 700 club.

Winnipeg dropped its third straight game.

## **RANGERS 4, ISLANDERS 3, OT**

**UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP)** — Mika Zibanejad scored 28



Dallas Stars' Jamie Benn (14) moves the puck around Carolina Hurricanes' Nino Niederreiter (21) during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Raleigh, N.C., on Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020.

Associated Press

seconds into overtime and the Rangers recovered after giving up a two-goal lead and beat the rival Islanders.

Artemi Panarin had a goal and an assist, and Greg McKegg and Brett Howden also scored to give the Rangers their franchise-record eighth straight road win. They have also won eight of nine overall and 11 of 14 to close in on a play-off spot.

Alexandar Georgiev, starting for the first time in nine days, stopped 42 shots to beat the Islanders for the third time in four starts this season.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored and got into a fight in his Islanders debut one day after being acquired in trade-deadline deal with Ottawa. Jordan Eberle and Brock Nelson also scored, Mathew Barzal had two assists as the Islanders lost for the fifth time in seven games (2-4-1). Semyon Varlamov finished with 24 saves.

## **MAPLE LEAFS 4, LIGHTNING 3**

**TAMPA, Fla. (AP)** — One game after losing to a 42-year-old emergency goaltender on home ice, Toronto earned a bit of redemption with a win over Tampa Bay.

John Tavares scored twice, William Nylander scored his

28th and Fredrik Andersen stopped 26 shots for Toronto. Jake Muzzin also scored, though he missed the third period after taking a puck off his right hand late in the second period.

Nikita Kucherov scored his 30th of the season, Pat Maroon notched his eighth and Yanni Gourde picked up his ninth as Tampa Bay lost its season-long third consecutive game in regulation and had an 11-game home winning streak ended.

Andrei Vasilevskiy finished with 19 saves.

## **FLYERS 4, SHARKS 2**

**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — Kevin Hayes had two goals and Travis Konecny and Nicolas Aube-Kubel also scored to lift Philadelphia to its fourth straight win.

Carter Hart stopped 26 shots and improved to 13-1 at home over his last 14 starts for a Flyers team suddenly looking for serious seeding in the Eastern Conference. The Flyers have won nine of 12 games and are fifth in the Eastern Conference.

First-year Flyers coach Alain Vigneault won his 684th game, tying Pat Quinn for 10th on the NHL career list. Joel Kellman and Noah Gregor scored for San Jose. San Jose captain Logan Couture, who had 36 points this season, returned from a

broken ankle suffered on Jan. 7 but couldn't help the Sharks avoid their fifth straight loss.

## **FLAMES 5, BRUINS 2**

**BOSTON (AP)** — Sean Monahan scored a pair of goals 1:12 apart in the second period and Calgary beat Boston.

Matthew Tkachuk had a goal and two assists for the Flames and Erik Gustafsson picked up an assist in his debut for Calgary, a day after coming over in a deal with Chicago.

Mikael Backlund also scored twice for Calgary, helping seal the win on a goal with 1:30 left in the third and adding an empty-netter in the final minute. David Rittich finished with 26 saves for Calgary.

Brad Marchand scored a short-handed goal for the Bruins, who were playing their first home game since Feb. 15 and came out flat after a four-game road trip. The Bruins lost back-to-back games for the first time since a four-game skid in early December. Chris Wagner also scored for Boston and Tuukka Rask finished with 26 saves.

## **CANUCKS 4, CANADIENS 3, OT**

**MONTREAL (AP)** — Tyler Tofoli scored 1:35 into overtime and Vancouver beat Montreal.

Bo Horvat, Alexander Edler,

and Jake Virtanen also scored for Vancouver.

Paul Byron, Shea Weber, and Jordan Weal scored for Montreal.

Thatcher Demko made 37 saves for his 11th victory of the season. Carey Price made 29 saves in the loss.

## **DEVILS 4, RED WINGS 1**

**DETROIT (AP)** — Cory Schneider made 27 saves for his first victory of the season, leading New Jersey past Detroit. Joey Anderson, Jesper Bratt, Kyle Palmieri and Nikita Gusev scored for the Devils, who won for the seventh time in 10 games. Detroit is 3-16-1 in its last 20. Valtteri Filppula had the only goal for the Red Wings. Schneider improved to 1-6-1 on the season and won for the first time since March 25 of last year.

## **BLUES 6, BLACKHAWKS 5**

**ST. LOUIS (AP)** — Zach Sanford had two goals and an assist, leading St. Louis to a wild win over Chicago and its fifth straight win.

Sanford scored the tie-breaking goal on a power play with at 13:35 of the third period, rallying the Blues from a 3-2 deficit after two periods.

Justin Faulk, Ryan O'Reilly, Brayden Schenn and Robert Thomas also scored for St. Louis. Thomas, David Perron, Jaden Schwartz each added two assists.

Brandon Saad, Duncan Keith and Patrick Kane scored power-play goals. Connor Murphy and Matthew Highmore also scored for Chicago.

Jordan Binnington had 25 saves in winning his fourth straight for the Blues. Corey Crawford recorded 31 saves for Chicago.

## **PREDATORS 3, SENATORS 2**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)** — Ryan Ellis and Viktor Arvidsson scored power-play goals in the second period as Nashville rallied to beat Ottawa for its second straight win.

Colin Blackwell also scored as Nashville split the season series with the Senators. Juuse Saros made 33 saves and now is 8-3-0 over his last 12 appearances.

Thomas Chabot and Filip Chlapik scored for Ottawa. □





In this Oct. 8, 2019, file photo, Nashville Predators head coach Peter Laviolette watches the action in an NHL hockey game against the San Jose Sharks, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

## Laviolette to coach Team USA at world hockey championships

**COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.**

**(AP)** — Peter Laviolette is returning to the bench after being selected as the coach of the United States men's national team competing at the world hockey championships in May.

The move was announced by USA Hockey on Wednesday, and comes seven weeks after Laviolette was fired by the Nashville Predators.

Laviolette ranks 16th in NHL wins with 637 covering four teams over 18 seasons, including the 2006 Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes. He also coached the New York Islanders and Philadelphia Flyers.

From Massachusetts, the 55-year-old Laviolette also has extensive experience representing the U.S. as a coach and player on the international stage.

The tournament being held in Switzerland will mark the fourth time Laviolette has coached the U.S. at the world championships, and first since 2014, when the Americans lost to Czech Republic in the quarterfinals in Belarus. He was also U.S. coach in 2004, when the team won a bronze medal, and '05.

Laviolette also coached the national team to an eighth-place finish at the 2006 Olympics.

As a player, Laviolette was a two-time Olympian in representing the U.S. in 1988 and 1994, when he served as team captain.

"Peter is a terrific coach and someone who has had success wherever he's been," said USA Hockey's John Vanbiesbrouck. "We're thrilled to have him back as head coach of our men's national team."

Team USA's roster will begin being stocked once the NHL's regular season concludes during the first weekend in April. The Americans have been limited to winning just six bronze medals since a silver-medal finish in 1950.

The world championships are scheduled to run from May 8 to 24. □



Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber speaks during the Major League Soccer 25th Season kickoff event in New York, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2020.

Associated Press

## MLS owners predict league will surpass MLB, Premier League

**By RONALD BLUM**

**AP Sports Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Los Angeles FC lead owner Larry Berg predicts Major League Soccer will surpass Major League Baseball in popularity during the next 10 years and Inter Miami owner Jorge Mas maintains it will be of higher quality than the Premier League and La Liga by 2045.

The pair spoke at the league's kickoff event Wednesday, three days ahead of the start of its 25th season.

MLS anticipates the status of soccer in the U.S. will be boosted when the Americans co-host the 2026 World Cup with Mexico and Canada.

"We definitely have the demographics in our favor, both in terms of youth and diversity. So I think we'll pass baseball and hockey and be the No. 3 sport in the U.S. behind football and basketball," Berg said. "I think we will be the league of choice. I think we're already a league of choice to a certain extent, whether we can be a top-five league or a top-three league will really come down at the end of the day to money, our ability to compete for players."

MLS is expanding to 26 teams with the addition of David Beckham's Inter Miami and Nashville, and plans are in place to reach 30 franchises by 2022 — triple the league's low from 2002-04. The league has increasingly attracted better players from South America.

"I think the good news is players want to play here," Berg said. "We're the United States of America. People want to live here. It's an incredible lifestyle. The infrastructure is fantastic."

Mas co-owns the Miami team that launches this weekend, partnering with former England captain Beckham. He talked about what MLS will look like for its 50th year in 2045. "I think the MLS will be one of the top sports leagues in the United States. I think it will be on par or exceed the best leagues in the world, the Premier League or Serie A or La Liga worldwide," Mas said. "I think that the MLS 25 years from now will be Premier League-ish if we want to so-call it that on the metrics that leagues are measured by."

Clark Hunt, CEO of MLS' Dallas team and the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, compared soccer's progress

in the U.S. to that of the NFL, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

"The momentum that we have I think has a chance to take us to where the NFL is today," he said.

Beckham boosted the league when he played for the LA Galaxy from 2007-12, a deal that gave him the right to buy an expansion fee at a discount. "Do I think in the next 10 years it will challenge the European leagues? It's what we all strive for. It's what we will strive to commit to," Beckham said. "This should never be a league where players from Europe come to retire. That's not where you want to be. It's not where we want to be as owners."

Austin, Texas, and Charlotte, North Carolina, join the league next year, followed by St. Louis and Sacramento, California. Charlotte, announced in December, agreed to pay a \$325 million expansion fee.

Detroit, Las Vegas and Phoenix remain in contact with the league, which also is monitoring efforts in San Diego. More warm-weather cities would help the schedule early and late in the year.

"We have no plan in



# Bloomberg's online campaign tests Facebook, Twitter rules

By **DAVID KLEPPER** and **AMANDA SEITZ**  
**Associated Press**

Mike Bloomberg's stockpile of cash, swarm of employees and paid social media influencers are testing the abilities of online platforms -- and his Democratic challengers -- to keep up with an expensive internet campaign.

Despite the billionaire and former New York City mayor's late entry into the presidential race, he has far outspent his rivals on nearly every platform in a matter of weeks.

His unconventional online strategy is heavy on memes and the paid support of prominent social media users, blurring the lines between political advertising, satire and misinformation.

That has not only boosted the platforms' bottom lines, but has also revealed how easily their policies can be bent.

"We're in the position where tech companies can't even apply their own policies to what we're seeing," said Mark Jablonowski, chief technology officer at DSPolitical, a digital advertising firm that has worked with several Democratic campaigns this year. "It's a different paradigm, and this mix is likely to be effective."

Bloomberg's self-funded campaign allows him to try out new online tactics and quickly buy an online community that other candidates have spent years building out.



**Democratic presidential candidates, former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg, raises his hand during the Democratic presidential primary debate at the Gaillard Center, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020, in Charleston, S.C., co-hosted by CBS News and the Congressional Black Caucus Institute.**

**Associated Press**

Bloomberg has so far spent \$55 million on Facebook and Instagram ads, \$9 million of that in the past week. That compares to \$33 million spent so far by Republican President Donald Trump, and \$10 million overall spent by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Democratic rival.

Bloomberg even leads on Snapchat, an app popular for sharing photos and short videos, where political ad spending is negligible. All the presidential campaigns combined have spent roughly \$788,000 -- with Bloomberg's campaign spending almost all of it: \$686,000.

Earlier this month Bloomberg exposed a loophole in Instagram's policies to

run humorous, self-deprecating messages promoting himself on accounts of popular Instagram personalities with millions of younger followers.

The platform had discouraged campaigns from paying other Instagram accounts but amended its policies to allow them hours after the pro-Bloomberg posts went up, as long as they disclose who paid for the sponsored content.

Facebook, which owns Instagram, didn't collect revenue for the sponsored content so it won't catalog the posts for public viewing in Facebook's ad database, where anyone can see how much a politician spent on messages.

His campaign has stirred up trouble on Twitter, too.

Last week, Twitter suspended nearly 70 accounts for posting identical pro-Bloomberg messages, in violation of Twitter's rules against spam.

Bloomberg's campaign said the messages were taken from an app that allows campaign staffers and volunteers to share the language with their friends and family. The campaign said it did not create any of the accounts that were taken down by Twitter on Friday.

Still, Bloomberg's online campaign has people talking.

His Facebook video ad of former President Barack Obama describing him as a leader has been powerful -- and confusing.

In Obama's hometown of Chicago, Rep. Danny Davis, a longtime Democratic congressman, has heard from people who thought Obama had endorsed Bloomberg. And even those who know Obama hasn't endorsed Bloomberg find the message highly effective, Davis said.

"They know that it does not say that Barack Obama was endorsing Mike Bloomberg, but they also know it sounds like it could," Davis, who has endorsed Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, said of the ad.

After Bloomberg's widely panned first debate appearance last week, the campaign posted an edited video clip that made it appear as if his opponents stood in awkward silence for 20 seconds, as crickets chirped in the background, when Bloomberg asked who else on stage had ever started a business.

Bloomberg's campaign insists the video was "tongue-in-cheek."

Facebook said the video did not violate any of its policies. Twitter, however, said such a campaign video would be labeled as manipulated once a new

policy takes effect March 5.

That altered video could be the beginning of a "slippery slope," warned Tara McGowan, the co-founder of Acronym. Her group has pledged to spend \$74 million in digital advertising to keep Democrats in the spotlight this year and compete with Trump's digital presence.

"I hope they don't cross that line again, but he really doesn't have anything to lose," McGowan said.

The campaign reeled it in Monday after blowback from a series of tweets that included fake quotes from Sanders praising authoritarian leaders like North Korea's Kim Jong Un and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Critics called the tweets disinformation. A Bloomberg spokeswoman said the tweets were a joke but acknowledged the campaign is considering labeling future posts as satire to avoid accusations of spreading misinformation.

"Bloomberg is walking this very fine line," said Syracuse University professor Jenny Stromer-Galley, who researches online campaigns. She said his overall online approach could mislead voters who fail to grasp the satire or who don't know that influencers supporting him may have been paid to do so.

It remains to be seen if Bloomberg's approach will translate into votes. He won't appear on a ballot until 14 states hold primaries next Tuesday.

But whoever wins the Democratic nomination will have to contend with Trump, who regularly retweets memes, videos and photos from his online army of supporters -- even when the tweets are misleading or offensive.

"What's made Trump's digital program so formidable isn't just how much he spent on ads -- it's how he spent those funds," McGowan said. "His campaign has been learning who his base is, what issues mobilize them, and has been able to use those insights to figure out who will respond." □

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## How auto insurers use your nondriving habits to raise prices

By **KAYDA NORMAN** of  
**NerdWallet**

You expect your car insurance rates to increase after you buy a new vehicle, cause a crash or add a young driver to your policy. But some insurers jack up prices based on seemingly unrelated data — like your magazine subscriptions or what groceries you buy. Even if you have a clean driving record and have stayed loyal to your insurance company for the past 10 years, you could be paying higher premiums than someone with the same driving history, car and background. Why? Price optimization.

### WHAT IS PRICE OPTIMIZATION?

Price optimization is the practice of charging higher rates based on the likelihood that a person will not shop around for a lower price. Insurers create algorithms based on all kinds of personal data, including loyalty to other service providers and shopping behavior, but not your driving habits. This is a separate formula from other common auto insurance rate factors like age, neighborhood, gender and the type of car you drive.

Factors can run the gamut from your magazine subscriptions, the number of phones you buy and your web browsing history. This means a company's most loyal customers may be most affected by this practice.



In this Jan. 22, 2018, file photo a shopper scans an Amazon Go app on a cellphone while entering an Amazon Go store in Seattle.

And while it's true insurers often have a loyalty discount, if you're overcharged by 30%, a 5% or 10% loyalty discount isn't worth it, explains Robert Hunter, director of insurance at the Consumer Federation of America, a nonprofit group based in Washington, D.C.

For example, Consumer Watchdog, a nonprofit based in Los Angeles, detailed a recent case in which Farmers Insurance overcharged its longtime California customers 4%-13% more in premiums each year than it should have — \$26 million to \$29 million a year in total.

### WHO IS AFFECTED BY PRICE OPTIMIZATION?

Price optimization is illegal in 20 states, but the CFA asserts all states should out-

law the tactic. "Some companies are still using it, some have dropped it completely — we don't know which are which," Hunter says. And while every state requires rates not be excessive or unfairly discriminatory, he says some state insurance commissioners just aren't paying attention to price optimization. "It's hidden in rates and hard to find."

Because companies use different algorithms to determine rates, price optimization can affect anyone who doesn't compare insurance rates often. Even those not affected by price optimization can save hundreds of dollars a year by comparing rates.

"The reason they can charge you \$1,000 and an-

other person \$2,000 is because the person paying \$2,000 doesn't know about the \$1,000 company out there," Hunter says.

### SHOP AROUND AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR

Auto insurance shopping isn't glamorous, but just an hour of your time comparing rates might pay for your next vacation. Whether you shop online, through an agent or a combination, here are some quick guidelines on how to compare car insurance quotes. Auto insurance premiums change as often as every six months, so you might benefit from doing a search each time your policy is up for renewal, but if that seems like a hassle, aim for once per year.

Sarah Brown, president and

CEO of Keller-Brown Insurance Services of Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania, notes it's not necessarily a matter of time but life events that can cause rate changes. She sees the biggest rate inflation when customers add a young driver to their policies or buy a new vehicle. She says it's best to shop around before you're hit with higher rates.

"You may qualify for a preferred pricing tier before the young driver is added," for example, but you may not qualify after, Brown says. Customers considered "preferred" by insurers tend to have clean driving records and credit histories, and receive the best rates. Other times you should compare rates include:

- After you've had a car accident, DUI or traffic ticket.
- Before moving or relocating.
- When you want to change what your policy covers.

### PRICE ISN'T THE ONLY FACTOR

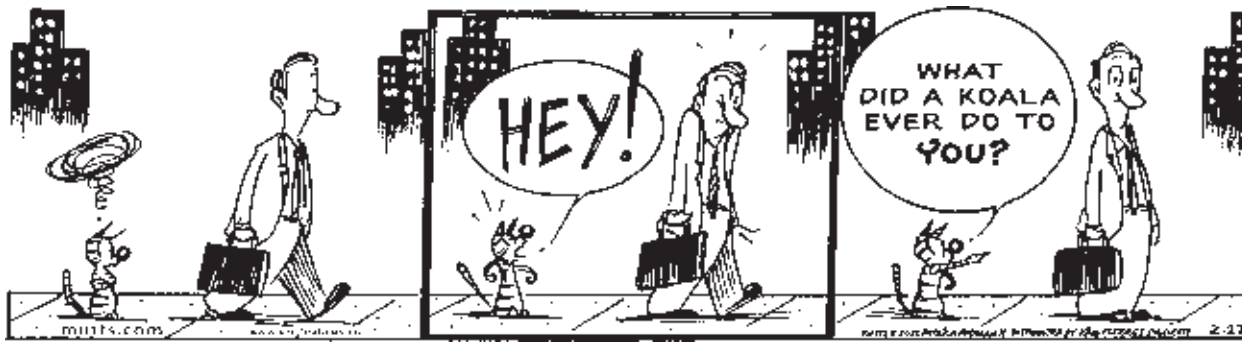
Drivers should consider more than cost when choosing an insurer, including things like the company's reputation and customer satisfaction scores.

"It's very easy to be seduced into focusing on the price. But you're buying this insurance to protect yourself against that fateful day when something happens," says Harvey Rosenfield, founder of Consumer Watchdog. □

Associated Press



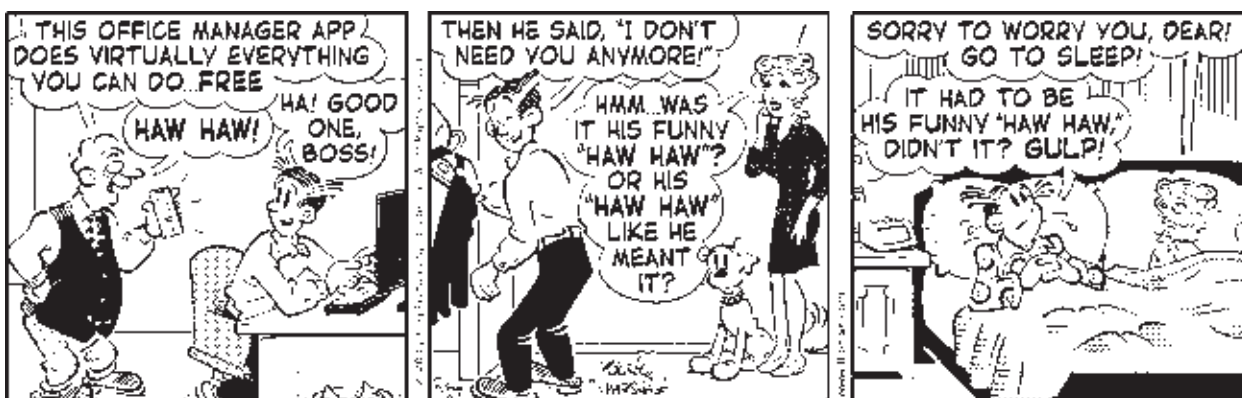
**Mutts**



**6 Chix**



**Blondie**



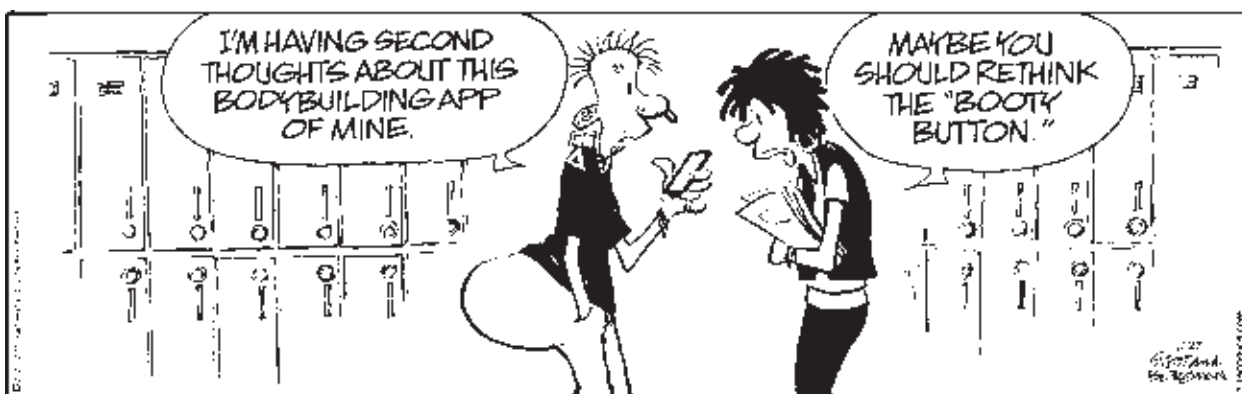
**Mother Goose & Grimm**



**Baby Blues**



**Zits**



**Conceptis Sudoku**

	9		7		6		5	
4		3		1			9	7
3		7					4	
5								8
8		9				3		5
	6		9		4		1	

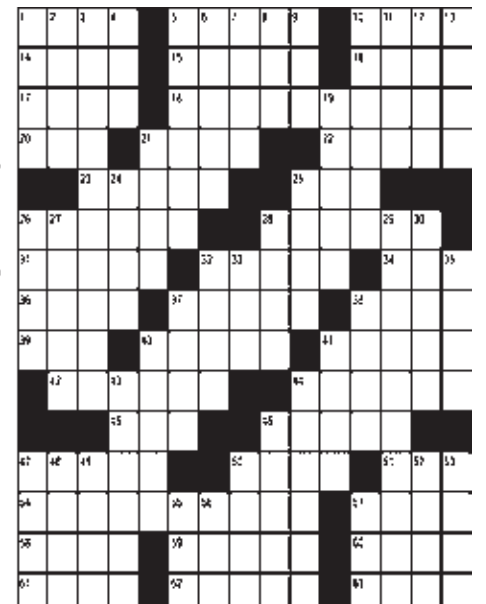
Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

8	7	5	6	2	1	9	3	4
2	9	3	4	5	8	1	7	6
4	6	1	9	7	3	5	8	2
6	5	9	3	8	7	4	2	1
3	2	8	1	6	4	7	9	5
7	1	4	5	9	2	3	6	8
9	8	2	7	1	5	6	4	3
5	4	7	8	3	6	2	1	9
1	3	6	2	4	9	8	5	7

- ACROSS**
- Cheese in a red wax coating
  - Van course of study
  - Pres. Wm. Howard
  - Gas station name
  - Amplifier
  - Aggravate
  - Positive
  - Second most populous U.S. city
  - Braggart's problem
  - Quick
  - First stage
  - Wedding party member
  - Rotten
  - Nearest
  - Unwanted nose growths
  - Skink
  - one's duty to
  - Theater productions
  - Decompose
  - Leave out
  - Kids & Thicke
  - Sandwich shop
  - The Voice network
  - Word before cape or svelte
  - Sat for an artist
  - Breathing disorder
  - Slurp
  - London
  - Fallen 2016 in
  - Overuse the tumor
  - Charisma
  - Sc of bacteria
  - Cushion
  - Germs
  - ist paper of cl chores
  - Spanish cheers
  - Green fruits
  - As straight arrow
  - for hope to obtain
  - Department store chain
  - Leaves



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

2/27/20

**Wednesday's Puzzle Solved**

REST	PASS	FLEW
ULCER	RIOT	RENE
SLIDE	AMBULANCE	
EYE	VET	MINI
NOISE	BBC	
METALS	SLEEPS	
ALIKE	SPIEL	RAW
MOSS	REARS	TOGA
APT	PEARS	NOMAD
ESTEEM	BE MUSE	
W.A.N.	HEVEL	
STRICT	USA	GDT
LDSEENS	DIANA	
ABAT	ROOK	ALTER
WEOS	STAY	LEST

- DOWN**
- At relaxed
  - Prescription
  - Gymnastics
  - Name for a Stogie
  - Disease
  - by any other name
  - In jokingly
  - Stop time
  - troct
  - In style
  - Needs a doctor
  - Escape
  - SAT for one
  - Hockey scores
  - He's a native
  - Visent public disorder
  - Bad Wi
  - Such limit
  - Wendal
  - Cuban ballroom dance
  - Rectangular glass piece
  - Assume in advance
  - Fool parts
  - Sincere request
  - Drink the Fido
  - Wave movement
  - Hemingway's "A Farewell to
  - High cards
  - Explorer Vasco da
  - Eden resident
  - Puts on as attire
  - Big game
  - Claves edge
  - Price sticker or a store product



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Marriott Ocean Club  
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#### Marriott Ocean Club

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1 BR Ocean Front \$ 20 K  
2 BR Ocean View \$ 17 K  
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 26 K

#### Marriott Surf Club

Platinum Season  
2 BR Ocean View \$ 17 K  
2 BR Ocean Side \$ 18 K  
2 BR Ocean Front \$ 26 K  
3 BR Ocean View \$ 26 K

#### Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK # 8  
building 6 on the 4 th floor  
27 weeks remain \$15 K  
1 BR WK # 11  
building 7 on the 3rd floor  
33 weeks remain \$15 K

#### Aruba Divi Phoenix

2 BR PH WK # 11/12  
building 9 on the 7 th floor  
30 weeks remain \$35 K each

#### Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK # 6  
Birdie 1 on the 2 sd floor  
19 weeks remain \$ 8 K  
Studio WK # 5,7,8 \$8 K each  
Birdie 1 on Ground floor  
22/27/29 weeks remain

#### Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK # 8/9 \$9,5 K each  
Eagle 9 Ground floor  
27 and 19 weeks remain  
1 BR WK # 11 \$9 K  
Birdie 3 with 26 weeks remain

#### Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK 12/13 \$9,5 K each  
Birdie 10 Ground Floor  
33/34 weeks remain  
Studio WK # 5,6,7,8,9  
Birdie 9 3rd floor \$10 K each  
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# How deadly is new coronavirus? It's still too early to tell

By LAURAN NEERGAARD

AP Medical Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Scientists can't tell yet how deadly the new virus that's spreading around the globe really is — and deepening the mystery, the fatality rate differs even within China.

As infections of the virus that causes COVID-19 surge in other countries, even a low fatality rate can add up to lots of victims, and understanding why one place fares better than another becomes critical to unravel.

"You could have bad outcomes with this initially until you really get the hang of how to manage" it, Dr. Bruce Aylward, the World Health Organization envoy who led a team of scientists just back from China, warned Tuesday.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE DEATH RATE?

In the central China city of Wuhan, where the new coronavirus first exploded, 2% to 4% of patients have died, according to WHO. But in the rest of hard-hit China, the death rate was strikingly lower, 0.7%.

There's nothing different about the virus from one place to another. Instead, the never-before-seen strain of coronavirus struck Wuhan fast — before anyone knew what the illness was — and overwhelmed health facilities. As is usual at the beginning of an outbreak, the first patients were severely ill before they sought care, Aylward said.

By the time people were getting sick in other parts of China, authorities were better able to spot milder cases — meaning there were more known infections for each death counted.



**Bruce Aylward, Team Lead WHO-China joint mission on COVID-19, speaks to the media about the COVID-19 after returning from China, during a press conference, at the World Health Organization, WHO, headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020.**

Associated Press

And while there are no specific treatments for COVID-19, earlier supportive care may help, too. China went from about 15 days between onset of symptoms and hospitalization early in the outbreak, to about three days more recently.

Still, Aylward expressed frustration at people saying: "Oh, the mortality rate's not so bad because there's way more mild cases." Sorry, the same number of people that were dying, still die.

## WHAT ABOUT DEATHS OUTSIDE OF CHINA?

Until the past week, most people diagnosed outside of China had become infected while traveling there.

People who travel generally are healthier and thus may be better able to recover, noted Johns Hopkins University outbreak specialist Lauren Sauer. And countries began screening returning travelers, spot-

ting infections far earlier in places where the medical system wasn't already strained.

That's now changing, with clusters of cases in Japan, Italy and Iran, and the death toll outside of China growing.

Aylward cautioned that authorities should be careful of "artificially high" death rates early on: Some of those countries likely are seeing the sickest patients at first and missing milder

cases, just like Wuhan did.

## HOW DOES COVID-19 COMPARE TO OTHER DISEASES?

A cousin of this new virus caused the far deadlier severe acute respiratory syndrome outbreak in 2003, and about 10% of SARS patients died.

Flu is a different virus family, and some strains are deadlier than others. On average, the death rate from seasonal flu is about 0.1%, said Dr. Anthony Fauci of

the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

That's far lower than what has been calculated so far for COVID-19. But millions of people get the flu every year around the world, leading to an annual death toll in the hundreds of thousands.

## WHO'S MOST AT RISK FROM COVID-19?

Older people, especially those with chronic illnesses such as heart or lung diseases, are more at risk.

Among younger people, deaths are rarer, Aylward said. But some young deaths have made headlines, such as the 34-year-old doctor in China who was reprimanded by communist authorities for sounding an early alarm about the virus only to later succumb to it.

In China, 80% of patients are mildly ill when the virus is detected, compared with 13% who already are severely ill. While the sickest to start with are at highest risk of death, Aylward said, a fraction of the mildly ill do go on to die — for unknown reasons.

On average, however, WHO says people with mild cases recover in about two weeks, while those who are sicker can take anywhere from three to six weeks. □

## Satellite almost on empty gets new life after space docking

By MARCIA DUNN

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

**(AP)** — A communication satellite almost out of fuel has gotten a new life after the first space docking of its kind.

Northrop Grumman and Intelsat announced the successful link-up nearly 22,500 miles (36,000 kilometers) above Earth on Wednesday. It's the first time two commercial satellites have joined in orbit like this.

The recently launched satellite — Northrop Grumman's Mission Extension Vehicle, or MEV-1 — will serve as a guide dog of sorts for its aging Intelsat

companion. Company officials called it a historic moment for space commerce, akin to the three-spacemaker capture of a wayward Intelsat satellite 28 years ago.

"We're pushing the boundaries of what many thought would be impossible," said Tom Wilson, president of SpaceLogistics, a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman. "The impossible is now a reality. Today is a great example of that."

The Northrop Grumman satellite was launched from Kazakhstan in October. On Tuesday, it closed in on the 19-year-old In-

telSat 901 satellite and clamped onto it. The duo will remain attached for the next five years.

This novel rescue was carried out at a slightly higher orbit to avoid jeopardizing other satellites if something had gone wrong. The Intelsat satellite was never designed for this kind of docking; officials said everything went well. Once maneuvered back down into its operational orbit, the Intelsat satellite should resume operations in another month or two. MEV-1 will move on to another satellite in need once its five-year hitch is over. □

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## High note: Lockhart marks 25 years as Boston Pops conductor

By WILLIAM J. KOLE

Associated Press

**BOSTON (AP)** — Strike up the band: Keith Lockhart is marking 25 years as the conductor of "America's Orchestra." The Boston Pops said Wednesday its 2020 season will pay special tribute to Lockhart, its second longest-tenured conductor after the legendary Arthur Fiedler.

Only Fiedler, who conducted for nearly half a century, has been more of a fixture at the Pops. Founded in 1885, the orchestra is known nationally for its July Fourth concerts on the banks of the Charles River, where fireworks back up the percussion section.

"I'm thrilled and humbled to have reached my 25th anniversary season as conductor of what is truly the one-and-only Boston Pops,"

Lockhart said. Lockhart was just 35 and a musical wunderkind when he took the baton in 1995, following in the footsteps of "Star Wars" composer John Williams and Fiedler, who conducted from 1930 until his death in 1979. Since then, Lockhart has led the Pops in more than 2,000 concerts worldwide, including the 2002 Super Bowl and the 2008 NBA Finals, and has shared the stage with several hundred guest artists ranging from Elton John and former President Bill Clinton to astronaut Buzz Aldrin and Big Bird. There have been 45 national tours to more than 150 cities in 38 states, and four tours to Japan and South Korea. "There is no real encore to this job," the Grammy-nominated conductor said in a 2015 interview with The As-



In this July 3, 2017, file photo, conductor Keith Lockhart waves during a rehearsal for the annual Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular on the Esplanade in Boston.

Associated Press

sociated Press. On May 6, the comedy duo Penn & Teller kicks off the new season at Boston's Symphony Hall, the home the Pops share with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Broadway stars Megan Hilty and Jason Danieley will perform

with the Pops on June 2-4, and Sting will be a special guest June 9. Reflecting on Lockhart's tenure, the Pops poked good-natured fun at its mention on TV's "The Simpsons," when Homer and his family took a "hate-cation" to Boston — only

to fall in love with the city that has "a Symphony AND a Pops." Before coming to the Pops, the Poughkeepsie, New York, native was associate conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony and Cincinnati Pops orchestras and music director of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra. "Through the years, Keith Lockhart has embraced Boston," an orchestra statement said. "And in return, Boston has embraced him."

Last year, while the Pops were touring in Florida, Lockhart invited student survivors from the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland to perform a song — composed by two of them — honoring the community's resilience. □

## Dior invokes #MeToo in feminist-inspired fashion show



Models wear creations for the Dior fashion collection during Women's fashion week Fall/Winter 2020/21 presented in Paris, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020.

Associated Press

By THOMAS ADAMSON AP  
Fashion Writer

"Consent, Consent, Consent" flashed the neon set lights at Dior's latest ready-to-wear show in Paris.

It signaled that the house's first ever female designer, Maria Grazia Chiuri, would continue to explore her touchstone of feminism for her fall-winter 2020 designs. The set, the fruit of a collaboration with artist Claire Fontaine, made a strong impact on VIP guests — including actress Sigourney Weaver and singer Carla Bruni. Some paused for thought, especially as the

show was delayed, in discussions of the #MeToo era and its influence on art — one day after Harvey Weinstein was convicted of rape and sexual assault and led off to prison in handcuffs.

The designs themselves cleverly riffed off the empowerment idea at the start: Such as the Dior signature bar jacket, reimagined as ribbed and angular, and twinned with a men's shirt and business tie on a female model with a short pixie hairstyle. It was the show's strongest fashion statement. □



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In this Dec. 16, 2019, file photo, Disney CEO Robert Iger arrives at the world premiere of "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker", in Los Angeles The Walt Disney Co.

Associated Press

## Disney CEO Bob Iger steps down in surprise announcement

By **MAE ANDERSON and TALI ARBEL AP Business Writers**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Disney CEO Bob Iger, who steered the company's absorption of Star Wars, Pixar, Marvel and Fox's entertainment businesses and the launch of a Netflix challenger, is stepping down immediately, the company said in a surprise announcement Tuesday.

The Walt Disney Co. named as his replacement Bob Chapek, most recently chairman of Disney's parks, experiences and products business.

"Did not see this coming -- Wowza," tweeted Light-Shed media analyst Rich Greenfield.

Iger will remain executive chairman through the end of his contract on Dec. 31, 2021. Besides leading the board, Iger said he will spend more time on Disney's creative endeavors, including the ESPN sports network, the newly acquired Fox studios and the Hulu and Disney Plus streaming services. He said he could not do that while running Disney on a day-to-day basis.

"It was not accelerated for any particular reason other than I felt the need was now to make this change," Iger said on a conference call with reporters and analysts.

Iger steered Disney through the successful purchases of Lucasfilms, Marvel, Pixar and other brands that became big moneymakers for Disney.

Last year, the top five movies in U.S. and Canada theaters were all Disney movies, including two from Marvel and one from Pixar.

With the Dec. 20 release of the latest "Star Wars" movie, Disney had seven movies that each sold at least \$1 billion in tickets worldwide last year.

Iger's most recent coup was orchestrating a \$71 billion purchase of Fox's entertainment business in March and launching the Disney Plus streaming ser-

vice in November. That service got nearly 29 million paid subscribers in less than three months. In a statement, Iger said it was the "optimal time" for a transition.

Pivotal Research Group analyst Jeffrey Wlodarczak said Iger had implied he would stay until his contract ended in 2021.

"On the other hand, they just successfully closed the Fox deal and had an unquestionably successful launch of Disney Plus so maybe he felt earlier was better to hand off the reins," he said.

Colin Gillis, director of research at Chatham Road Partners, said the choice of Chapek seems solid because his parks division has had success.

Chapek said that while he has not led television networks or streaming services, his background in consumer-oriented businesses should help.

Chapek and Iger both stressed that Disney would continue on the direction it had already been taking.

Disney is facing challenges to its traditional media business as cord-cutting picks up, meaning less fees from cable and satellite companies to carry Disney networks such as ABC, ESPN and Freeform. Disney's own streaming services require the company to forgo money in licensing revenue, although the company is betting that money from subscriptions will eventually make up for that.

In the short term, Disney parks in Hong Kong and Shanghai, China, remain closed because of the coronavirus outbreak. In a CNBC interview, Chapek said the outbreak may be a "bump in the road," but he said the company could weather it given "affinity for the brand."

Iger told CNBC he had no plans to stay with Disney beyond next year.

Iger's appointment as CEO in 2005 had been accompanied by controversy

and protest from dissident shareholders Roy E. Disney and Stanley Gold.

But he has come to be seen as a golden-boy top executive, and even someone who could run for president.

Iger told Vogue in 2018 that he had started seriously exploring a run for president because he is "horrified at the state of politics in America today," but the Fox deal stopped his plans. Oprah Winfrey told Vogue that she "really, really pushed him to run."

Iger, a former weatherman, joined ABC in 1974, 22 years before Disney bought the network.

At ABC, Iger developed such successful programs as "Home Improvement," "The Drew Carey Show," and "America's Funniest Home Videos" and was instrumental in launching the quiz show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." He was also criticized for cancelling well-regarded but expensive shows such as "Twin Peaks" and "thirty-something."

Since Iger became CEO, Disney's stock price has risen fivefold. Its stock fell more than 2% in extended trading following the announcement, on top of a broader market selloff on virus fears during regular trading.

Iger, 69, was the second-highest paid CEO in 2018, as calculated by The Associated Press and Equilar, an executive data firm.

He earned \$65.6 million. The top earner was Discovery's David Zaslav who earned \$129.5 million.

Susan Arnold, the independent lead director of the Disney board, said succession planning had been ongoing for several years.

Chapek, 60, is only the seventh CEO in Disney history. Chapek was head of the parks, experiences and products division since it was created in 2018.

He was previously head of parks and resorts and before that president of consumer products. □

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FRI 5:00 7:15 9:30 11:45  
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**PBP** MON-THU 4:20 6:35 8:50  
FRI 4:20 6:35 8:50 11:05  
SAT 2:05 4:20 6:35 8:50 | 11:05  
SUN 2:05 4:20 6:35 8:50

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## Michael Douglas, Zeta-Jones to co-host Jerusalem ceremony

By JOSEF FEDERMAN  
Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Hollywood power couple Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones are set to return to Israel as co-hosts of this year's Genesis Prize ceremony.

The Genesis Prize Foundation announced on Wednesday that the pair would co-host the June 18 event, where former Soviet dissident and Israeli politician Natan Sharansky is to be honored as the 2020 laureate. Douglas, 75, was the 2015 winner of the prestigious \$1 million prize, granted each year in recognition of professional achievement, contribution to humanity and commitment to Jewish values and Israel. He is recognized for his cinematic work and advocacy for disarmament as a U.N. Messenger of Peace. Douglas, whose mother wasn't Jewish and who himself is intermarried, directed his award toward

projects promoting diversity and inclusiveness in the Jewish world.

"Catherine and I look forward to returning to Israel, a country our entire family loves so much," Douglas said in a statement. "We are particularly honored to have the opportunity to host the ceremony honoring a true Jewish hero, Natan Sharansky."

Douglas said the visit will also be a way for his family to honor the memory of his father, Kirk Douglas, who died on Feb. 6 at the age of 103. Kirk Douglas, born Issur Danielovitch and raised in a religious home, reconnected with his Jewish roots in his later years and had a strong connection to Israel. "His re-discovery of his Jewish faith, his passion for his heritage has been a guiding light for me, passed down to my children," Douglas said.

The foundation said that during Douglas' visit, it will hold a special event honoring



In this Jan. 19, 2020 file photo, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas arrive at the 26th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards, in Los Angeles, California.

Associated Press

ing his father's cinematic legacy. Douglas, who has acted and produced in dozens of films over a five-decade career, won the Academy Award for best actor for his role as ruthless financier Gordon Gekko in the 1987 movie "Wall Street." Other films have included "Fatal Attraction," "Basic Instinct," "Romancing the Stone," "Traffic" and the

recent "Ant-Man" superhero movies. He also won an Emmy and Golden Globe for his portrayal of Liberace in the 2013 HBO production "Behind the Candelabra." Zeta-Jones, 50, won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in the 2002 musical "Chicago" and collected the 2010 Tony Award for Lead Actress in a Musical for her

work in the Broadway hit "A Little Night Music." Her other films include "Ocean's 12," "The Terminal," and "The Mask of Zorro" and "Traffic." The Genesis Prize was inaugurated in 2014 and is run in a partnership between the private Genesis Prize Foundation and the chairman's office of the Jewish Agency, a nonprofit that works closely with the Israeli government to serve Jewish communities worldwide. Other previous winners include Michael Bloomberg, violinist Itzhak Perlman, sculptor Sir Anish Kapoor and New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft. The 2018 winner, actress Natalie Portman, pulled out of the prize ceremony because she did not want to appear to be endorsing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The same year, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg received the foundation's first Lifetime Achievement Award. □



# More companies get into business of Black History Month

By **ALEXANDRA OLSON**

**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — From shoes and T-shirts to dolls and tote bags, more companies and brands are getting into the business of Black History Month but trying not to leave the impression that African American consumers are important just once a year.

Some businesses are using February to show off the diversity of their year-round product lines or to draw attention to the creative talent of their African American employees.

Target rolled out a Black History Month assortment that spotlights black-owned brands such as Honey Pot feminine products, Lip Bar cosmetics and Scotch Porter, which specializes in men's grooming. The collection includes books, music and food that are favorites among Target's African American employee resource group, which has more than 1,000 members. The company has been promoting the products through blogs and commentary from its staff.

H&M has a new street wear collection designed in collaboration with Ruth Carter, the Academy-Award winning designer behind the costumes for films including "Black Panther," "Malcolm X" and "Amistad." The pants, shirts, totes and hats — featuring the pan-African flag colors of red, black and green — debuted in February, but the collection was not billed as a Black History Month tribute.

"Companies are getting smart about making it integrated into the rest of the year, as opposed to one month when you give money to the NAACP or run an ad, as opposed to treating it as an expense, just one of those things we have to do otherwise we'll get in trouble," said Brenda Lee, founding director of the marketing research firm Vision Strategy and Insights, which researches African American, Hispanic and Asian consumers.

Ezinne Kwubiri, H&M's head of inclusion and diversity for



In this Feb. 20, 2020, photo, items from H&M's new street wear collection are displayed at a store in New York.

**Associated Press**

North America, said she notices more companies publicly marking Black History Month, but "the next thing is to challenge them to do more during the year." The Carter collection, for instance, will be a long-term collaboration, she said.

"Let's not make this about one month of recognition," said Kwubiri, who was hired to her position following an uproar two years ago when H&M featured a black child model wearing a "monkey in the jungle" T-shirt on its website in the U.K.

While companies have been marking Black History Month for years, the events are getting bigger, and more brands are joining in,

Target launched its Black History Month assortments five years ago and has since increased the number of products to more than 100, carried in more than 600 stores. Melanie Gatewood, director of multicultural merchandise, said Target was able to tap into black-owned businesses that it has been working with for years. More than one-third of the products in the assortment this year are from black-owned or founded businesses.

Nike launched a special edition sneaker 15 years ago for Black History month with the pan-African colors. This year, it has an entire collection modeled by

of Project sWish, a Chicago foundation dedicated to inner city youths.

Michaels, the arts and crafts retailer, has a collection of black heritage products this year, a project that originated with its African American and black employee resource group. The products include printed vinyl rolls that have proved so popular that Michaels plans to include them in its permanent collection.

"A major part of avoiding missteps is being authentic in anything you do," said Davette Angelo, a merchandising product manager, adding that he and designer Sharae Averhart "pulled on our experiences and backgrounds to put this collection together." Still, there have been mistakes along the way, especially when there is no consensus on what crosses the line into exploitation and trivialization.

Barnes & Noble this month pulled a widely condemned line of classic literature reissued with covers featuring dark-skinned versions of characters like Alice in Wonderland. The organizers of "Diverse Editions" relied on artificial intelligence to review more than 100 older books to identify which ones to reissue.

"That was a great example of that being all about

pushing the books and nothing about promoting the community," Lee said. "What about that was grounded in African American history?"

Even companies rooted in the black community can't always escape criticism.

OneUnited Bank, the country's largest black-owned bank, released a debit card in mid-February with Harriet Tubman on it as a way to highlight the stalled effort to put the abolitionist icon on the \$20 bill. There was an instant backlash from Twitter users who chafed at the image of the former slave on a debit card.

Frederick Knight, an associate professor of history at Morehouse College, said it might have been more meaningful to elevate a lesser-known figure more directly tied to black economic empowerment, pointing to Maggie Lena Walker, who chartered a bank after the Civil War.

"There are more appropriate people they could have used this opportunity for, rather than take advantage of an iconic person like Harriet Tubman," Knight said.

But the bank stands by its decision, noting that the card is the ninth in a series with black faces on them, including one launched in partnership with the Black Lives Matter movement. It stems from a re-branding the company undertook in 2015 to put its black identity as the center of its marketing. OneUnited Bank President Teri Williams said the Tubman card has been its best seller.

Adriana Waterston, senior vice president of insights and strategy for Horowitz Research, said companies are responding to customers that take pride in seeing their heritage represented in powerful brands.

"Especially in today's racially polarized environment, showing up and supporting one community speaks volumes," Waterston said. "If you are only showing up once a year, black consumers will easily see through this and consider you disingenuous." □



In this Feb. 20, 2020, photo, items from H&M's new street wear collection are displayed at a store in New York.

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seeking to connect with increasingly diverse generations of consumers.

young black leaders including artist Shani Crowe and McKinley Nelson, founder